

Tuesday August 11 1998

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The Guardian

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Drugs hike shocks doctors

Sarah Boseley
Health Correspondent

A BIG increase in the price of a drug given routinely to prevent women haemorrhaging after they give birth could cost the NHS nearly £1 million and has raised the spectre of more maternal deaths if health authorities start to ration its use.

Syntometrine is given as an injection to almost all women after delivery of a baby to close down the uterus and check bleeding. The drug is more than 30 years old and has played a big part in preventing deaths in childbirth.

Until June 29, Syntometrine and its sister drug Syntocinon, which is used to induce labour, were manufactured and sold by Novartis, the UK's fifth biggest supplier of drugs to the NHS. The cost to the NHS was 18p per 1ml ampoule.

But Novartis has sold the product licence to Alliance Pharmaceuticals, a small company based in Chippenham, Wiltshire. Alliance is selling the same dose at £1.40, nearly eight times the old price.

Caroline Flint, former president of the Royal College of Midwives and director of the Birth Centre, was outraged. "I think it is appalling, frankly. I'm fed up with people being so greedy, especially at the expense of women's health."

Joe Collier, editor of the Drug and Therapeutics Bulletin, said the price rise was outrageous. "Both companies seem to have been party to a cynical manipulation of the NHS drug pricing system," he said.

"This price hike is probably within the letter of the pharmaceutical price regulation scheme, but it tramples over the spirit of the arrangement and should be reversed."

Novartis says it sold 650,000 doses of Syntometrine a year, which puts the increased bill

to the NHS at nearly £800,000. But the increased cost to the health service of Syntocinon is even greater.

Novartis sold Syntocinon at 19.5p per 5ml dose and 22.4p per 10ml dose. The Alliance price is £1.38 and £1.57. The 1,450,000 doses supplied per year could cost the NHS over £2 million more.

The price rise, particularly in Syntometrine, is a worry for obstetricians, midwives and others who care for women during and after childbirth. One gynaecologist, who preferred not to be named, said he was horrified. "Some not so scrupulous people will say I'm not going to give this drug because it is so expensive. But post-partum haemorrhage still occurs and still kills women. This is very worrying."

Syntometrine is also used after miscarriages and terminations of pregnancy. Those women who begin to haemorrhage after birth are given two ampoules of the drug instead of one.

Although the drug is well out of patent, it is almost universally used.

Ms Flint said almost every woman was given Syntometrine as an injection after labour to speed up delivery of the placenta and stop bleeding.

One of its components was ergometrine. "It is a fungus which grows on rye. It was found in the pyramids and has been used by midwives since time immemorial." She knew of no other drug that would do the job.

Novartis and Alliance said the two drugs had been under-priced for years, and Novartis said they had become uneconomical to produce. "Faced with the possibility of having to discontinue production of these medicines, we decided to transfer ownership to Alliance Pharmaceuticals which, as a smaller company, is better positioned to continue to support them."

"Our concern is to ensure continuity of supply of Syntocinon and Syntometrine which have played a vital role for many years."

From zero to heroes



THE oldest joke in English sport will have to be rewritten, at least for the time being. England's cricket team, suddenly hailed as tough and resolute, rather than weak and inept, were last night celebrating their first victory in a major Test series for 12 years, writes David Hopp.

More than 10,000 spectators, let in free, descended on Headingley to watch less than half-an-hour's play as Eng-

land took the last two South African wickets to secure a 2-1 victory and a 2-1 win in the series.

The victory completed a remarkable turnaround. Barely a month ago, as England looked certain to lose the third Test and the football World Cup dominated attention, the game was held to be in terminal decline. Since then enthusiasm has soared.

Alec Stewart, the captain, said: "To finally win a five-Test series is very special... this may now be the start of some good times." John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, sent him a personal letter of congratulations, saying the victory "has given the country a great lift".

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Minister rejects calls for genetic food ban

Immune system damage in tests

Tim Radford
Science Editor

THE row over genetically engineered foods took a new twist yesterday as the Government refused to ban them after tests showed they could damage the immune systems of rats and stunt their growth.

The Tory health spokesman, Alan Duncan, yesterday talked of "massive consumer suspicion" after a television programme last night reported that rats at the Rowett Research Institute in Aberdeen had eaten geneti-

cally modified potatoes for 100 days, and suffered stunted growth and damage to their immune systems — and questioned the safety of other products.

The Liberal Democrat environment spokesman, Norman Baker, said the results "show that we have become the guinea pigs in a gigantic experiment".

The food minister, Jeff Rooker, turned down calls for an immediate ban but insisted that the Government would have an "ultra-cautious" approach.

However, Labour MP Ian Gibson, a member of the Com-



monwealth Science and Technology Committee, said he was worried by the findings of the Rowett Institute and called on the Government to act. Dr Gibson said ministers should con-

sider calling a moratorium on the sale of genetically modified (GM) products while more tests were carried out.

Derek Burke, a former government adviser on food technology, said calls for a moratorium on GM foods were "an over-reaction".

Philip James, director of the Rowett Institute, said the experiment was only one of many specifically concerned with the safety of potential new foods, none of which were available commercially.

There are only four genetically modified foods on sale in Britain — tomato paste, vegetarian cheese, maize and soya.

Although environmentalists are worried about the threat of "superweeds", triggered by the arrival of herbicide-resistant crops, the latest row is over research into the genes that naturally protect crops from attack by insects

and worms. Arpad Pusztai of the Rowett Institute took a genetically engineered potato containing a protein from a South American bean, and fed it to rats in the laboratory. Later, he told the World In-

Action TV programme: "We are assured this is absolutely safe, and that no conceivable harm could come to us from eating it. But if you gave me the choice now, I wouldn't eat it."

Pray accept this gong, Mr Hughes, for your pithy poems



Ted Hughes: wrote 12 lines last year as laureate

Amelia Gentleman

AS LITERARY awards go, this one appears somewhat unorthodox. There is no shortlist and no panel of distinguished judges. Instead it is handed out according to the whim of one woman, it carries no cash prize, and can be awarded only when a former recipient dies.

But the Poet Laureate, Ted Hughes, was said to be delighted yesterday when the Queen awarded him the Order of Merit, reflecting her respect for him as an "individual of exceptional distinction".

Hughes, aged 68, joins an eclectic group of 24, includ-

ing Baroness Thatcher, Lucian Freud, Sir Norman Foster, and Nelson Mandela — an honorary foreign member. Hughes was appointed to replace the composer Sir Michael Tippett, who died this year.

A Buckingham Palace spokesman said yesterday that Hughes had been granted the award partly in recognition of his work as Poet Laureate and partly as a tribute to his talent more generally.

"The Order of Merit is given to subjects who have advanced the arts, learning and literature. It is a personal selection made by the Queen — ministerial advice is not required," he said.

Hughes took over as laureate in 1984 after the death of Sir John Betjeman. He has been less than prolific in the role, producing a few verses to mark royal occasions and a slender collection published in 1992, *Rain-Charms for the Ducky*. Last year he wrote just 12 lines as laureate — in tribute to Princess Diana.

"As Poet Laureate he is not obliged to write any poetry for the royal family," the palace pointed out, adding that Hughes had penned the occasional birthday poem for the Queen, the Queen Mother, and the Duke of Edinburgh.

Hughes's recent near-monopoly on literary awards must be disheartening for

rival poets. In January he won the Whitbread Book of the Year Award for his Tales of Ovid, a loose translation of the Roman poet's *Metamorphoses*, pocketing £21,000.

A month later, Birthday Letters, the account of his marriage to the American poet Sylvia Plath, published 35 years after her suicide, went to the top of the best-seller lists, selling to date some 90,000 copies.

In March, he received another £10,000 in the WH Smith Literary Award, again for *Tales from Ovid*.

Yesterday's award was more modest: a small red and blue enamel cross, decorated with the words "For Merit".

● The Order of Merit: The Queen; the Duke of Edinburgh; Sir George Edwards, industrial engineer; Sir Alan Hodgkin, medical academic; The Rev Prof Owen Chadwick, historian; Sir Andrew Huxley, biophysicist; Frederick Sanger, biochemist; Lord Mervyn, conductor; Prof Sir Ernest Gombrich, historian; Dr Max Perutz, biologist; Dame Cecily Saunders, medical academic; Prof Lord Porter of Lutterham, scientist; Baroness Thatcher, politician; Dame Joan Sutherland, opera singer; Prof Francis Crick, biologist; Dame Ninette de Valois, Royal Ballet founder; Sir Michael Atiyah, mathematician; Lucian Freud, artist; Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, academic and politician; Sir Aaron Klug, scientist; Sir John Gielgud, actor; Lord Denning, of Whitechapel, former judge; Sir Norman Foster, architect; Sir Dennis Rooke, industrialist; Honorary Member, Nelson Mandela.

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In G2 Health today: Don't let the sun go to your head: she's out to play havoc

+ Gavin Evans wonders about the possible link between Nick Leeson's traumatic fall from grace and his colon cancer

Death toll reaches 210 as Americans step up investigation into atrocities □ Defence secretary believes attacks were 'long planned'

US puts \$2m bounty on bombers

Gary Young in Washington and Lucy Hannan in Nairobi

THE United States announced a \$2 million reward yesterday for information leading to the conviction of the bombers of its embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

Investigators suspect the bombers used Semtex, which, they say, would imply the involvement of a large organisation, or even a state. The US defence secretary, William Cohen, said the attacks were "long in the planning" and "not the act of some isolated individual, a madman".

Washington now has several hundred Americans on the ground in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam investigating the atrocity in which more than 200 people died, most of them African. More than 100 FBI agents are working with local investigators.

US officials hope that a security camera at the Tanzania embassy will yield some clues. It was pointed directly at the spot where the bomb exploded.

Tanzanian authorities yesterday announced the arrest of around a dozen suspects, including Sudanese and Iraqis. But the US state department spokeswoman played this down, saying a routine

roundup had been carried out.

The death toll from the two bombings, which came almost simultaneously last Friday morning, rose to at least 210 yesterday with more than 5,000 injured. The bomb in Nairobi, which accounted for at least 200 of the dead, contained as much as 600 pounds of explosive.

A ceremony marking the return home of most of the American bodies is to be held on Thursday in Washington. Twelve Americans died, all in the Nairobi blast.

The Washington Post yesterday quoted an unidentified embassy official in Nairobi as saying the vehicle apparently

'Terror can never, will never, deter America from its purpose'

Madeleine Albright



containing the bomb there first drove to the main entrance and was sent by guards to the rear, where the

bomb exploded. The grim search through the rubble at the Kenyan site, led by Israeli rescue teams,

went on yesterday, but with hopes fading that a woman called Rose would be found alive. She was believed trapped in the lift shaft of the building behind the embassy that took the full force of the blast.

"Our dogs are indicating there is no sign of life," said an Israeli surgeon, Nahum Nesher, "but we have not stopped believing she could be alive".

He said the Israeli team had reached a room in the secretarial training college, which was housed in the tMundi building, and was bringing out bodies. "There were many women, leaning on their desks, in the sitting position,

crushed by the roof against the floor." At the city mortuary, waiting relatives and friends rushed towards the Red Cross van bringing in the latest cargo of dead, crushed beyond recognition.

President Clinton, speaking in Kentucky yesterday, said: "We must be strong in dealing with this. We must not be deterred by the threat of other actions."

He is to be at the airport when 11 of the 12 American bodies are flown into Washington from a US military base in Germany. The 12th, who was married to a Kenyan, will be buried in her adopted homeland.

Madeleine Albright, the US secretary of state, who announced the \$2 million (\$1.25 million) reward in Washington, said the money would go to any substantial information that could help convict "the cowards that committed this act".

Terrorism, she said, "can never, will never, deter America from its purpose or presence around the globe".

Such rewards successfully netted suspects in both the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing in New York and the shooting of two Central Intelligence Agency men near Washington the same year.

Kenyan grief, page 6

Sainsbury's links up with village shops

James Meikle and Roger Cowe

SUPERSTORE was yesterday moved on to the village green with the announcement that rural shops have acquired an unlikely ally to help them stay in business, the supermarket chain Sainsbury's.

Village shopkeepers will be able to stock the company's own-brand products in a scheme designed to widen the range of goods, cut prices and increase profits. They will go shopping at the local Sainsbury's and quality like normal customers for the company's loyalty scheme to help subsidise discounts in their own stores.

The scheme's backers suggested the move might increase rural "home shopping", with customers abandoning their weekly supermarket run and letting village storekeepers collect and deliver their groceries instead.

The chance for supermarkets to preserve rather than undermine smaller stores comes after years of decline in the village shop, which is extinct in four out of 10 English parishes.

But there was concern that the move could herald a tightening of the supermarkets' stranglehold. The chains, whose plans for big out-of-town sites face stricter controls, are already challenging

town corner shops with smaller urban convenience stores and are strengthening their grip on petrol station forecourts. But Sainsbury's yesterday stressed that the latest move was the idea of village shop campaigners.

Richard Fry, trustee of the Village Retail Services Association, which asked for the trials, said: "This agreement heralds a major change in retailing thought. It shows major retailers are interested in saving the village shop and helping rural communities."

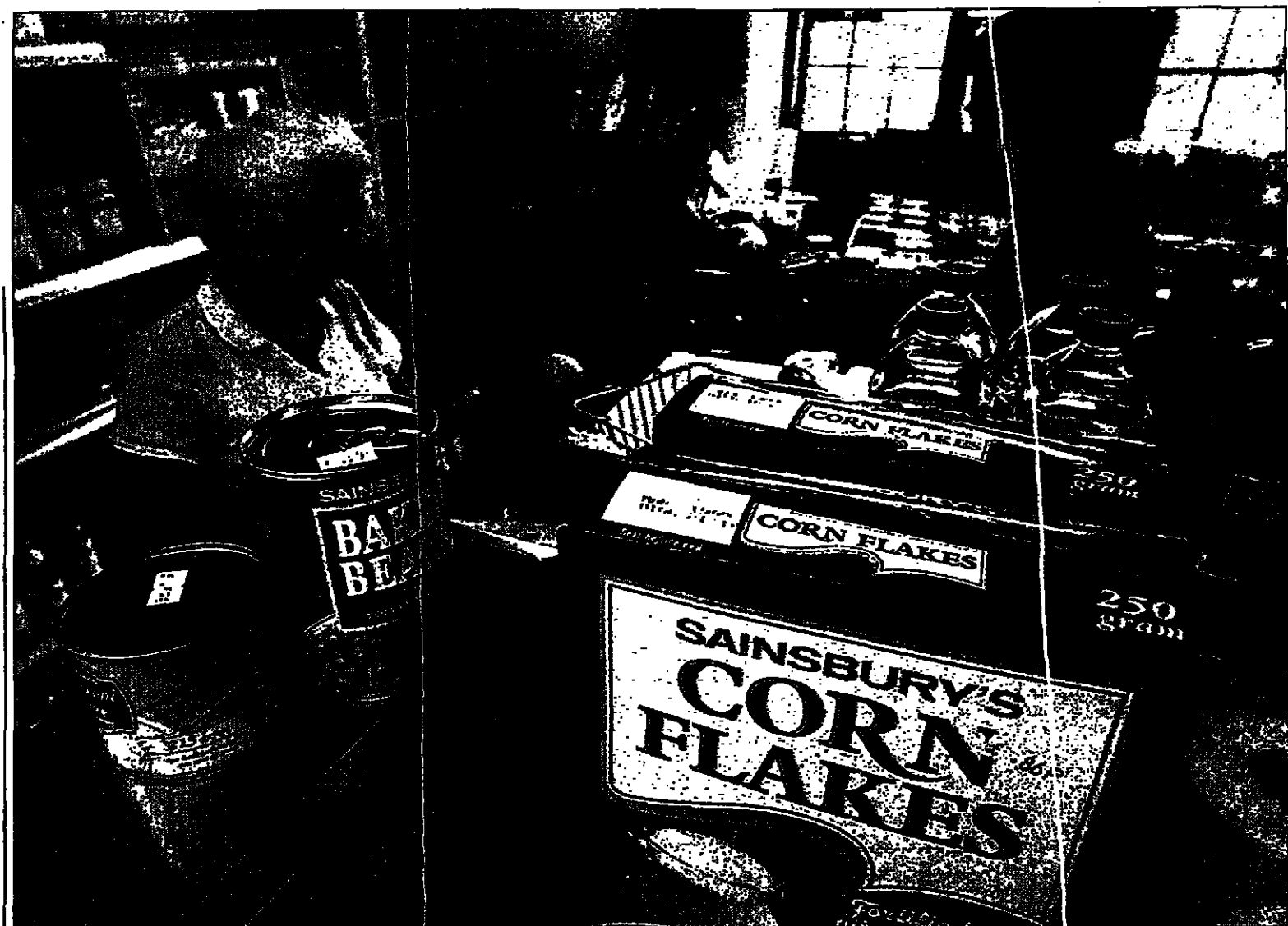
"This could change the way a lot of people do their shop-

'This could change the way a lot of people do their shopping'

ping. It has tremendous scope down the road in terms of utilising new technology."

David Clapham, a member of the Sainsbury's board, said: "Customers said they wanted our products near work, near home and in between. This is a real change in our organisation — allowing our products to be sold in non-Sainsbury's outlets."

Shopkeepers will pay supermarket prices for most products, but there will be bulk purchase offers and loyalty points available. The vil-



Brenda Erscott offering Sainsbury's products in her store in Halstock, Dorset. 'I am hoping this will boost trade,' she said

PHOTOGRAPH: TIM CLIFF

lage shops will set their own prices.

Goods will not include perishables. Sainsbury's wants to avoid accusations that local meat and produce providers are being unfairly

undermined. It believes the links will help village consumers find speciality foods such as balsamic vinegar or saucers.

Among rural agencies and campaigning bodies, the

Council for the Protection of Rural England gave the most cautious endorsement. Gregor Hutcheon, its rural affairs officer, said: "It is not going to reduce the trend in loss of rural shops and post offices."

At the end of the day, you will have Sainsbury's brands wherever you are and wherever you go."

City analyst Tim Potter, of Merrill Lynch, suggested the move was "another nail in the coffin of cash and carry" while Booker, which supports the Happy Shopper label common in village stores, said wholesale specialists such as it were in a better position to serve independent shops.

In the early 90s the shop was forced to close and it was only the determination of villagers that enabled it to reopen. Mrs Erscott believes the scheme will go down well in places that are, like Halstock, ill-served by public transport.

Olive oil and balsamic vinegar offer sweet hope of survival

SAINSBURY'S turnover received a tiny boost yesterday as shoppers in a one-store Dorset village had the chance to buy the supermarket chain's own-brand products for the first time, writes Geoffrey Gibbs.

The shop and post office in Halstock has begun stocking Sainsbury's olive oil, balsamic vinegar, pasta and other selected items alongside its usual groceries and local butter and ham. Monday is a quiet shopping day in Halstock (pop. 400) but the store owner, Brenda Erscott, was pleased with how the first day had gone. Milk, baked beans and sauces bearing the Sainsbury's name had gone from the shelves and she believed the lure of such products might keep customers sweet and pull in others who usually shop in Yeovil, six miles away. "I am hoping this will boost trade for me," she said.

Robert Wheeler, a shopper, agreed: "Anything that will get people using the shop move has got to be good for the village," he said. "This is the only amenity Halstock has got left. We have lost the school, we have lost the pub and the shop has got to be there for the village. If that goes, we have had it."

In the early 90s the shop was forced to close and it was only the determination of villagers that enabled it to reopen. Mrs Erscott believes the scheme will go down well in places that are, like Halstock, ill-served by public transport.

There'll be a hot time on the old Beacons if Van and co have any say in it

Review

Tony Heath

Brecon Jazz Festival

FIFTEEN years on, the Brecon Jazz Festival has lost the all-too-predictable tag "New Orleans under the Beacons." Back in 1984 the

event was indeed mostly Basin Street and Banjos. Now the specialist music store set up in the Welsh market town has blossomed into a supermarket catering for tastes ranging from never-ending love affairs with the 12-bar blues to seekers of the truth as prescribed by effervescent modernists.

Van Morrison may not figure prominently in every lexicon of jazz greats. But he

pulled the crowds to pack Brecon's market hall, where earlier in the day wood carvers and second-hand book dealers were raking in the bonus provided by the first wave of some 50,000 people arriving for 24 hours of music and entertainment. There was even line dancing in Bethel Square, and a couple of samba bands.

Apart from Van the Man, the headline concerts of Dick

Hyman, a graduate of the Teddy Wilson school of piano playing, Michel Petruccianni, one of the brightest stars of the keyboard, and pianist Ahmad Jamal, invited investigation.

The tendency to strike the keys a hundred times when 30 would be enough seems to have taken root with Petruccianni since his first visit to Brecon six years ago.

Tenor saxophones came in threes at a relaxed gig in the

Canalside Theatre, when Scott Hamilton, Harry Allen and Ken Peplowski vied to produce the best blow.

The surprising onset of summer added brio to the open-air concerts. There were some 80 to choose from, offering a chance to check out the itinerant groups who came from far and wide. The Zenith Jazz and Blues Band from New South Wales led by trombonist John Edser, belted out Tin

Roof Blues and Blues for Jimmy Noone, a tribute which the late, great clarinetist would have found appealing.

Cooler, musically and climatically, was the gig indoors at the Castle Hotel. Joel Hellery, a mainstream trombonist from New York, slid thoughtfully through Ray Noble's classic 'The Very Thought of You. On their annual visit to Brecon, the Krukke Mania Band from

Breda in Holland is now so integrated with the town that Guy Jones, a local trumpeter, is an honorary playing member.

From a nearer home, the Cardiff-based Mike Harries Root Doctors, a lively jazz-Creole Cajun cocktail, took the palm for getting an audience on to its feet.

And in Brecon's ancient cathedral, Ethel Caffie-Austin and her gospel singers in-

duced several hundred to clap and sing along. A special concert to mark Humphrey Lyttelton's half-century as a band leader, a gig by Howard Alden, who is up there among the finest of jazz guitarists, Mark Latimer, a British pianist equally at home on a concert platform and in a marriage overlooking the River Usk — Brecon offered almost too much choice. Never mind, there's always next year.

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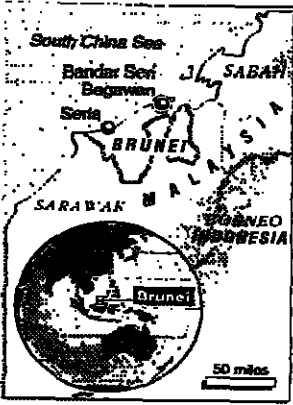
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Crowds lined the streets for the succession ceremony, but Prince Jefri (below), was absent TOP PHOTOGRAPH VINCENT THIAN



The man just installed as Brunei's next leader has a colourful past and steps into a fraught future. **Nick Cumming-Bruce** reports



The Sultan looks on as Prince Billah kisses the hand of the queen at a key moment in the lavish ceremony at which he became next in line to rule Brunei

PHOTOGRAPH DAVID LOH

From the snooker hall to a sultan's throne

TO THE boom of cannon and the drone of Muslim prayers, a snooker-crazy 24-year-old former Oxford student with a passion for Bon Jovi became heir yesterday to the throne of the tiny, oil-rich and scandal-ridden sultanate of Brunei.

At a 75-minute investiture ceremony in Brunei's sprawling 1,768-room royal palace, Prince al-Muhtadee Billah Bolkiah heard an uncle read the proclamation from a silk scroll borne on a golden cushion, before receiving a jewel-encrusted kris, or dagger, putting him in line to become the 30th ruler of one of the world's last absolute monarchies and certainly its richest.

Until last year, Prince Billah enjoyed the carefree life of

a student at Oxford and sometime competitor at international snooker meets, with a fondness for soccer, badminton and rock music — all indulged under the assumed commoner's name of Omar Hassan to ward off unwanted attention.

Yesterday, before 4,000 royal relatives, dignitaries and diplomats in a cavernous palace hall with gold-painted walls, Prince Billah heard a 10-minute prayer, then kissed the hands of his 52-year-old father, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, his mother, and the part-British former airline hostess who became his father's second wife.

Sporting a gold crown and a gold tunic in place of the natty waistcoats he donned for snooker, the sombre-looking prince climbed on to a

chariot-borne throne to be pulled through the rain-soaked streets of the Bruneian capital under the gaze of its pampered populace.

Sultan Hassanal, who turned out yesterday in military uniform complete with sword, has taken some care to give his son respectable Muslim credentials instead of the extravagant appetite for fast cars, casinos and call-girls reputedly indulged by some of the royal brothers.

Prince Billah, when still in his early teens, joined family members on a pilgrimage to Mecca, and his first year at Magdalen College was spent in a specially-designed course of Islamic studies along with the history and culture of Brunei. On the eve of his investiture, he spent nearly three hours at prayers in Bru-

nei's mosque. But after two years of studies, it seems he now finds himself plunged into local palace politics and the arts of running a semi-feudal sultanate blessed with lavish wealth but buffeted by scandal and the backlash of Asia's economic turmoil.

Conspicuous by his absence at yesterday's ceremony was Prince Billah's uncle Jefri. He is locked in a row with the Sultan, who has ordered an investigation into murky financial transactions by which Jefri is rumoured to have lost £10 billion.

In the meantime, he has stripped Jefri of control of Brunei's flagship holding company, Amadeo, with a portfolio of investments that ranges from London's Dorchester Hotel, acquired for \$40 million in the mid-1980s,

to Asprey's, the Bond Street jewellers, the New York Palace Hotel, and huge telecommunications assets.

The Sultan has stripped Jefri of his post as head of the Brunei Investment Agency, controlling vast overseas assets that are the sultanate's insurance against the day when its oil income dwindles.

Few details would normally emerge in public in this secretive sultanate, which gives its citizens free education and health care but no say on government, and has been run by royal decree under a state of emergency ever since the first stirrings of democracy in 1962 brought an abortive anti-monarchist revolt.

Local officials conceal the secrets of the government or royal purse — there is no way to distinguish between the

two — under the threat of imprisonment.

But Jefri, now in the United States, denies he left Amadeo crippled by debts and is warning he may yet contest the actions against him.

He voices respect for his brother but complains darkly that reactionary Muslim influences are "becoming entrenched at all levels of the government."

A statement released by an associate last week, and dismissed as nonsense by diplomats, spoke of shadowy Libyan and Iranian advisers taking control and working against him.

"I do not seek a fight at this time," Jefri said. "I shall, however, defend vigorously my position and the interests of my family if forced to do so."

\$40bn and 564 chandeliers

When Crown Prince Billah inherits the throne of the oil-rich sultanate, he will become the richest man in the world.

The Sultan's portfolio includes property, telecommunications and oil holdings estimated to be worth a total of \$40 billion (£25 billion).

A compact kingdom on the island of Borneo with a population of only 226,000, Brunei has gushing oil reserves which earn the crown \$4 million a day.

The Sultan lives in a \$300 million, gilded palace with 1,788 rooms — including

257 toilets, 564 chandeliers and five swimming pools.

The family owns the Dorchester Hotel and Asprey's, the royal jewellers, in London and the New York Palace Hotel.

The former Miss USA, Shannon Markietie, is suing the Sultan and his brother, Prince Jefri, for \$90 million allegedly for holding her prisoner in his palace. They deny the claim.

Founded by a pirate in the 16th century, the dynasty accepted British protection in the 1880s. In 1984 Brunei gained independence from Britain.

Jail for parents who caged girl in 'appalling' room for 15 months

David Ward

A MOTHER and father who caged their infant daughter in her bedroom by boarding up the windows and door were each jailed for six months for child cruelty yesterday.

Cardiff crown court heard that the couple kept their daughter in "appalling conditions" at their home in Caerphilly, near Cardiff, between the ages of three and five.

When police and social workers finally broke through a barricade of wooden planks, she was found whimpering and begging for a drink.

Asked why she had treated her child in this way, the mother, who cannot be named for legal reasons, alleged: "I wouldn't keep the worst baby in the world in these conditions but what can I do? She just crawls everywhere. What's a mother supposed to do?"

Iwan Bennett, prosecuting, said the girl was not taken into care until 15 months after being discovered in the room by social worker Elaine Thomas, when she visited the family in May 1996.

"The door to the bedroom had been removed and wooden boards had been nailed across it up to the height of six," he said. "Conditions were filthy — in contrast with the rest of the house which was very well appointed. The room contained only a dirty mattress and no toys. Human faeces of some age was smeared on the walls and the room stank."

Mr Bennett said the child's

room had returned to its original form," said Mr Bennett. "The doors and windows were again boarded up and the room smelled heavily of urine and faeces. The child was in the room, whimpering and crying 'drink, drink'."

"Again there was only a filthy mattress and no toys. She was dressed in a babygown suit which had been turned inside out so she couldn't take it off. She was wearing a

of gross emotional deprivation I have ever met in my 18 years in the job." He also criticised social workers for not taking the girl into care when they first found her.

The couple burst into tears as Judge Christopher Morton jailed them. "You caged your daughter in that room and left her in a very distressed state," he told them. "She suffered profound and prolonged neglect at your hands. But you are intellectually limited and your other children need you, so the sentence is much shorter than it would otherwise have been."

Last night the Caerphilly county borough council social services department blamed a previous local administration, the former Mid Glamorgan county council, for not acting to protect the girl. Chris Lawrence, director of social services, said: "A report produced earlier this year referred to a management culture in one district of the former Mid Glamorgan which discouraged front line social workers from pursuing child protection inquiries."

"Caerphilly county borough council is having to deal with the legacy of these problems."

'This is the worst case of emotional deprivation I have met in my 18 years in the job' — consultant paediatrician

brothers and sisters were kept in comfort. "It seems the parents singled out their youngest daughter for this treatment and she was made into a scapegoat." After the first visit, the couple made moves to improve matters, removing the boards and installing a baby gate. Social workers continued to call for six months but then visits stopped for eight months. "When social worker Marlene Anderson visited the home in August 1997 she found the

nappy which she had soiled." Shortly before her parents were arrested in August 1997, the girl began to attend a special school where teachers reported that she would beg for or steal food and could speak only in sentences of a few words. Mr Bennett said she was now with foster parents and could speak normally.

Dewi Evans, a consultant paediatrician at Singleton Hospital in Swansea, told the court: "This is the worst case

NHS hit by new licence-holder's big price rise for drug

continued from page 1 patients and clinicians alike for more than 30 years."

But Novartis could not put the price up unless it dropped the price of another drug it supplies to the NHS. Under the pharmaceutical price regulation scheme, drug companies are guaranteed a certain

level of profit from their NHS drugs, but cannot exceed a limit which is set as a proportion of their turnover.

Novartis, the NHS's fifth biggest supplier, has more than enough profit-making drugs and easily reaches its NHS ceiling. But Alliance, as a small firm with far fewer

NHS drugs, has not, and so it is able to put the price up dramatically.

John Dawson, managing director of Alliance Pharmaceuticals, said he needed to raise the price of Syntometrine. "I have had to put it at a price that makes it economic for running this business."

"You have to look at £1.40 — what it buys in today's world. Because the price of this drug didn't alter for so many years it had become so far out of its true value. What can you buy for £1.40? A hamburger? Syntometrine is good value for money for what it does."

Studies show the number of suicides rises on sunny days. Psychologists suggest this may be due to the realisation that even a bright day doesn't guarantee happiness.

All hot and bothered — remedies for summer ills

Health, G2 page 10

You're more likely to change your spouse than change your bank account.

- If your other half cost you a fortune on your credit cards, would you do something about it? Yes/No
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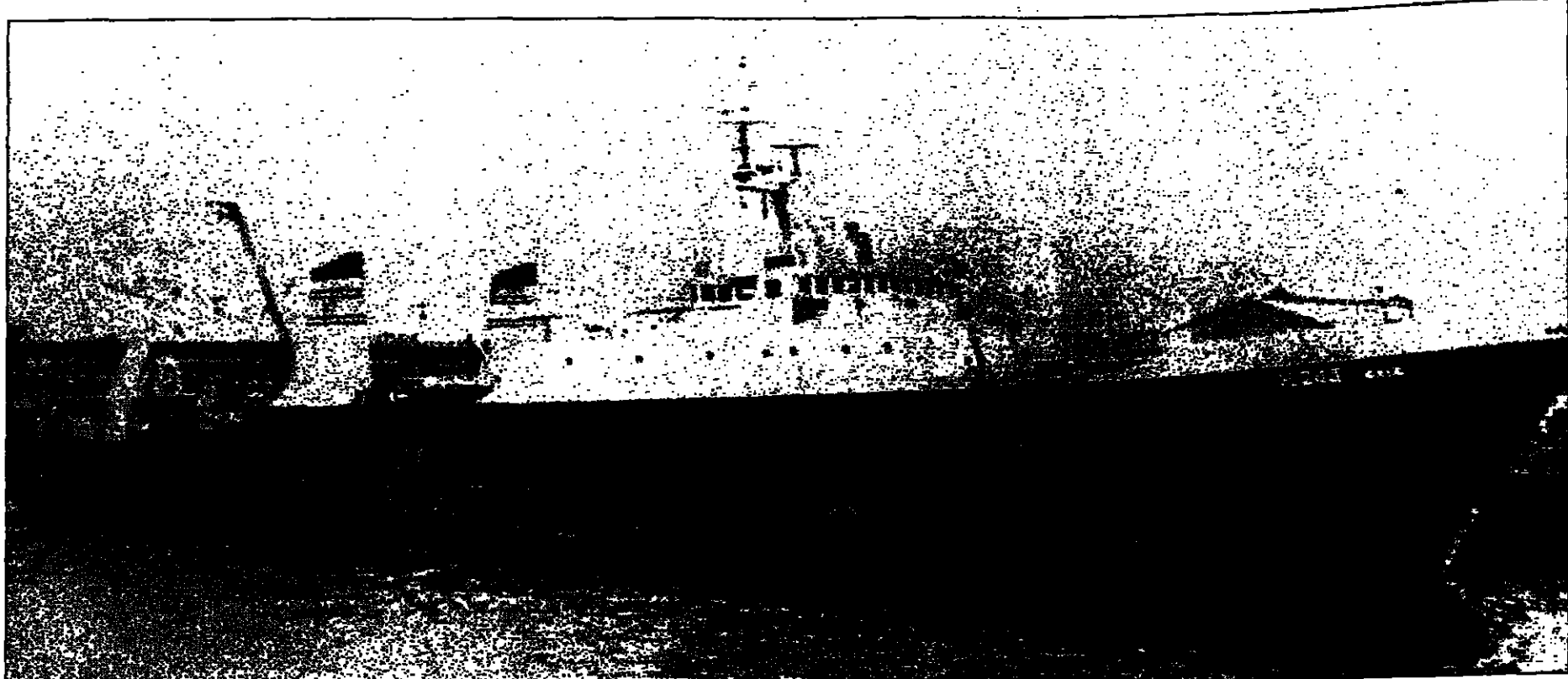
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Martin Wainwright on the mystery of the Gaul

Subs move in on wreck of 'spy ship'



The Gaul pictured shortly before she left on her final voyage. The 1,100-ton 'supertrawler' sank off northern Norway in 1974

PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN JONES

MIDGET submarines inched their way closer to the wreck of the trawler Gaul last night, amid continuing scepticism from relatives who have fought for 24 years to solve the mystery of the alleged spy ship's loss.

The operation was delayed when snagged fishing nets festooned over the stern of the

1,100-ton "supertrawler" last night, one of three cable-operated submarines. The Marine Accident Investigation Branch said that "extreme care" was being exercised to avoid losing the craft in 850ft of icy water off northern Norway.

The Transport Department, which commissioned the £2 million survey earlier this year after the wreck was

found and filmed by Channel 4, denied that official disassembling was still continuing. The producer of the award-winning documentary, Norman Fenton, said that "a lot of spin" was being put on the official expedition, with announcements of the Gaul being "discovered" and the "first pictures" coming up from the seabed.

A spokeswoman for the

MAIB said: "The wreck had to be looked for 'it wasn't marked by a buoy bobbing on the surface or anything like that.' But Mr Fenton, whose amateur £50,000 dive based on Findus trawlers' record of net snags achieved what the Defence Ministry claimed was impossible, said: "We gave them co-ordinates to three decimal places which they used in their tender for this

survey. That located the Gaul to within six feet."

Mr Fenton added that the net problem had been clearly identified by Channel 4 and its partners, the Norwegian TV channel NRK, and that initial government announcements about the Mansal 18 survey had said that the nets would be cut away before close quarters examination of the ship. The MAIB said that

the operation was dealing with problems as they arose, but would provide a thorough picture of the Gaul, which was lost in February 1974.

Film from the Mansal's submersibles yesterday showed the flaking white name of the trawler and the eerie inhumanity of a ship supposedly overwhelmed by extreme weather. Windows on the bridge are unbroken and the

trawler lies virtually undamaged on the seabed, like a child's model ship.

Two relatives of the 36 victims of the disaster watched on board the survey ship, run by Aberdeen-based salvors Dronik, as the video images were relayed to the surface.

Aubrey Bowles, whose 22-year-old brother Ronald was lost with the Gaul, said that he hoped one of the submersi-

bles would get into the ship to settle the question of whether the crew went down with her, overwhelmed by some sudden disaster. Mr Bowles, aged 53, from Wallsend, Tyne-side, said: "We were worried but now we're here and we've identified the wreck, it is with a bit of satisfaction that we are now maybe getting close to the truth of what really happened 24 years ago."

'We're sure she was scuttled by the Russians. Look at her. That isn't a ship smashed under by a storm'

JENNIFER Griffin has followed the mystery of the Gaul for almost half her life, with all the intensity of the Government's videoing submersibles which are now closing in on the wreck, writes Martin Wainwright.

She has felt one thing above all since her brother John went down with the unsinkable flagship of Hull's fishing fleet at the age of 23: anger. "And angry how I still feel today," she says.

"It's been a cover-up all along and it still is," Mrs Griffin insists, with the certainty of someone who has seen a government lie suddenly acknowledged after 24 years of denials. Speaking from her home on Hull's Bransholme estate, where many trawling

families have settled, she said: "It was Labour in power then, and they're back now and they're not going to want it all to come out ever."

"But we feel sure that ship was boarded and scuttled by the Russians who knew what she was up to. Look at her, hardly damaged, just one crack in a window, gently settled on the seabed. That isn't a ship knocked sideways by the weather or smashed under by a storm."

Mrs Griffin, aged 53, remembers Barry Sheena, the Government QC at the 1974 inquiry, firmly admonishing relatives for nonsense about spy missions; and William Rodgers reassuring John Prescott and his two fellow Hull MPs that the British

trawler fleet had no involvement in spying.

Lord Rodgers now acknowledges he was "misled"; but the retraction stops at 1973, when trawler-spying is supposed to have ended, and the Gaul is officially unconnected with snooping. "Fish," says Mrs Griffin. "And what they show us now won't end things, even if they do get in and find human remains."

"What'll they do? Count them all? Make her an official grave? No thank you. That would do just what they want — stop anyone going to have a look at her ever again."

Mrs Griffin's brother, John Heywood, was not meant to be on the trawler, but found himself well out to sea when he woke up after a night out drinking with his pal, Brian Dudding, whose sister, Carol Radford, was on the enterprise which found the ship.

The two women do not intend to shut up. "We're not giving up until they come clean," says Mrs Griffin.



The shipbuilder's plate of the Gaul wreck, which is lying in 850ft of water

Undercurrents of suspicion

February 8, 1974: Gaul makes daily 10am report to Hull owners. Later seen in blitzard by one of 32 other ships on North Cape Bank. Fails to make informal 4.30pm report.

February 11: Search starts. Size of operation — led by aircraft carrier HMS Hermes and diverting whole of Nato exercise Squadron taking place off Lofoten Islands — leads Soviets to believe Nato nuclear submarine lost.

February 15: Search called off. May: Norwegian whaler finds Gaul lifebelt off Lofoten. Plankton tests cast doubt on how bell reached position where found.

August: Hull's three MPs, including John Prescott, assured by Labour defence minister William Rodgers that British trawlers were not involved in spying.

September 17: Inquiry opens in Hull. Government witnesses deny spying allegations. Police quieten protests.

November 21: Inquiry report concludes Gaul foundered in exceptional weather.

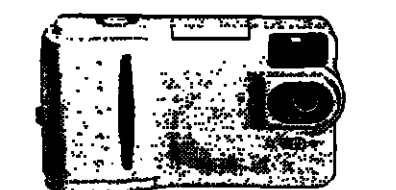
1977: Liferaft cover from Gaul found by Norwegian vessel but not revealed by British authorities.

January 1998: Government announces official examination of wreck and admits trawlers were used for spying pre-1973. Lord Rodgers says he was misled. Retired fishermen claim to have taken photographs for MoD, including alleged first news of 1992 Cuban missile convoys.

July 1998: Mansal 18 research vessel equipped with three remotely operated submersibles arrives for £2 million examination of wreck.

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Farmers reach for their guns as mink run wild in New Forest

Sarah Hall

THE animal rights activists who released 6,000 mink at the weekend have found their cause turning into a nightmare. Far from readily adjusting to a life of freedom, the mink are befuddled, behaving true to their nature and wreaking havoc.

Since members of the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) climbed over the perimeter fence of Crow Hill fur farm in Hampshire and smashed cages and cut wire, reports of mink killing birds of prey at an owl sanctuary in the New Forest are accompanied by rumours of their lashing out at cats and dogs.

The mink are paying the price for the activists' supposed humane behaviour. "I will shoot them on sight," vowed Bruce Berry, owner of the New Forest Owl Sanctuary, which has already claimed at least 12 hides.

Of the 4,000 mink, which have ventured beyond the fur farm near Ringwood, up to 2,000 have been shot, run over or caught in traps, with one farmer claiming to have blasted 100.

Public feeling is running high against the predator, which is threatening 80

square miles of the countryside. The widely held belief that, to quote Mr Berry, "they are pests, and there is nothing you can do but shoot them", has caused Hampshire police to set up a "mink desk" helpline to deal with the concerns of villagers, who jammed their switchboard.

Yet the ALF, which describes itself as "not so much an organisation as a state of mind" and condones damage to properties, was unrepentant yesterday.

"I know many of them are going to die, but at least they will have had a taste of freedom," said spokesman Robin Webb.

He added: "If they had stayed in the fur farm, every single one of them would have been killed. And the ones who survive will hopefully live their lives out in a natural environment."

He claimed that the mink — about 20in long with sharp teeth and aggressive temperaments — could adapt perfectly to life in the wild.

He denied that the ecological balance would be disturbed by a ferocious carnivore which, not being native to this country, is unchecked by any predator.

The group's stance was defended by the anti-fur pressure group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta), which said: "Any life outside of a cage is infinitely more preferable to a life in confinement."

It added: "If they are run over or are liable to preda-

dier of birds, eggs, fish and small mammals to kill calves or foals if particularly hungry.

Forest keeper Howard Taylor, who patrols 10,000 acres of the New Forest, said: "Whoever let these animals out, if they think of themselves as environmental warriors they should have thought of the environmental consequences of releasing such a vicious predator into this delicate ecosystem."

"They're at the top of the food chain, and the effect will be felt all the way down. It could be quite dramatic."

The pressure group Respect for Animals questioned the ALF's action, given the Government's commitment — reiterated last week by animal welfare minister Elliot Morley — to bring an end to fur farming despite a private member's bill on the issue having been dropped this session.

"The campaign is almost won in this country," said campaign director Mark Glover, pointing to the reduction of fur farms from 80 in the mid-1980s to 15. "I'm the last person to defend the Government unnecessarily, but they have repeatedly pledged to ban [the farming]. To carry out this sort of activity seems quite extraordinary."

Hindley play forced to switch venue

Dan Gledhill Arts Correspondent

APLAY about the Moors murderer Myra Hindley was dropped by one of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival's leading venues after sponsors threatened to withdraw their backing.

Calder's Cream Ale, which is sponsoring the Gilded Balloon, one of the "big three" fringe venues, thought that Myra and Ma was too outrageous. The next day the play, performed by the Hull-based Northern Theatre Company and School of Performing Arts, moved to the Assembly Rooms where it is being sponsored by the Observer.

The writer Diane Dubois said: "It's ironic because the play is not a biographical interpretation of the Moors murders but an examination of how we make sense of traumatic events. I don't think that sponsors should get involved in artistic activities. I wouldn't attempt to dictate financial policy."

A spokesperson for Calder's, which is owned by Carlsberg-Tetley, said: "We had concerns about Myra and Ma and we are comfortable with it being moved. Calder's is committed to the light-hearted side of the fringe."

Calder's was reacting to press reports about the unseen play — the Sun called it "twisted and sick" — and in a

plea to the venue's managers from Margaret Watson of the organisation Justice for Victims (Scotland).

She wrote: "I would like to appeal to you to think again about staging this play. To think deeply about the effect this play will have on those who have suffered more than enough pain and anguish at evil Hindley's hands."

Please put Hindley's innocent victims and their families before greed."

Karen Koren, artistic director of the Gilded Balloon, replied: "I believe that it is very important for a theatre company to be able to perform a piece of writing that can be controversial but has a valid point to make just as

any newspaper or journalist feels they have the right to. How are we going to try to make society better without questioning it?"

Earlier this year another Edinburgh play became embroiled in a dispute over the content of a fringe performance. Owen O'Neill had been booked to perform his acclaimed one-man show *Off My Face* at the Manchester Irish Festival in March.

But when the festival's principle sponsors Guinness realised that the show was about his struggle with alcoholism, they demanded that it be dropped.

Edinburgh Festival, G2, pages 8-9

A taste of the future



A family tucks into what the Ramblers' Association yesterday described as a 'picnic of the future' — on a traffic island in the middle of Vauxhall Cross, south London — after it emerged that the National Farmers' Union has urged restrictions on picnics in the countryside. PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARQUES

Woman who killed violent husband put on probation

Gerard Seenan

A WOMAN who stabbed her husband to death after enduring almost a quarter of a century of sexual abuse and violence was yesterday put on probation at the Old Bailey.

Diane Clark, aged 42, finally snapped when Graham Clark, aged 46, tried to throw her out of the home she shared with him and their five children in Farncombe, Surrey. As he leaned into the loft to pull out her suitcases, she stabbed him in the back with a kitchen knife.

The court had heard Mrs Clark described as a placid character who continually covered herself with long sleeves and sunglasses to try to hide the abuse she suffered.

Placing her on probation for three years, Judge Gerald Gordon spoke of the "smoking fuse of provocation" which Mrs Clark had laboured under before she let go and behaved "totally out of character".

Women's groups welcomed the sentence and the Crown's decision to accept a reduced charge of manslaughter. "This is one of those cases where, after a number of years, a woman who has suffered continuous abuse and violence, is finally broken down and killed her partner," said a Women's Aid spokeswoman. "It is good to see that the judge has shown mercy and understanding."



'A woman who has suffered continuous abuse and violence has finally broken down and killed her partner. It is good to see that the judge has shown mercy and understanding for Diane Clark (left) Women's Aid spokeswoman

Mrs Clark's defence counsel, Peter Feinberg QC, said she had endured violence and sexual abuse since the beginning of their marriage. She had been taking prescribed drugs since 1977 to help cope with anxiety and she was devastated by what she had done.

"This was a marriage beset by bouts of, at first, drunken violence and forced sex and, towards the end, violence and forced sex without even the drink," he said.

hour, after only two months of courtship. He had a violent temper, convictions for assault, and was usually out of work. Mrs Clark supported their children by working as a hairdresser and waitress.

Last September, Clark ordered her from their home. As he went to the loft to get her suitcases she ran downstairs to the kitchen and armed herself with a knife. She followed him to the door of the loft and stabbed him in the back and shoulder.

Speaking outside the court, Mrs Clark said: "Today is the start of a new life for myself and my boys. I have endured 24 years of hell and the whole family has suffered, but at last we can put it behind us."

Jail chief halts computer plan

Alan Travis
Home Affairs Editor

ONE of Whitehall's biggest and most complex private finance projects — the £500 million computerisation of prisons — was suddenly halted yesterday amid fears that it could get release dates wrong.

More than two years work has gone into the scheme which affects more than 2,500 staff and involves the computerisation of much of the Prison Service's work including inmates' records, court appearances, sentence and accommodation planning, finance and personnel. The project, codenamed Quantum, is a flagship of the Treasury's Private Finance Initiative. It was planned to take more than 10 years to implement.

It is believed that among official concerns is the risk that the computer system might not even get right the dates when inmates should be released leaving open the danger of compensation claims. Last night Richard Tilt, director general of the Prison Service, said he had ordered that work be halted for up to six months for a "radical and deep-rooted" examination of all aspects of the project.

"This has been a very difficult decision. My board members and I have had to balance the need for new information technology equipment with our duty to safeguard public funds," said Mr Tilt.

"We must satisfy ourselves

now that the project will deliver what we want. At the moment I am not satisfied this is so."

The decision follows a governors' revolt after they discovered that they would no longer be managing their own secretaries who were to be transferred with thousands of other staff to a new Service Delivery Directorate.

The Quantum project has failed to win many friends. For some it means consultation documents 400 to 600 pages long written in an obscure language which talks of "accessing the telephone equipment" when it means picking up the telephone.

It has been run in partnership with two private companies, a consortium named Prism, which includes the SEMA computer company, and EDS Ltd. Both firms were told yesterday of the decision.

David Roddan, general secretary of the Prison Governors' Association, said: "It is essential we take stock of what we actually need to carry out the basic functions of the Prison Service. I cannot believe that we need to spend half a billion pounds."

In the Prison Service annual report published last week Mr Tilt said: "In a business like ours that has grown so rapidly in the last four years it is vital that we have the best possible technology to support us. The Quantum project, designed to improve the way the Service handles information on prisoners, personnel and finance, will ensure that we achieve this."

Struck off doctors risk losing merit pay

Sarah Bosseley
Health Correspondent

HOSPITAL consultants who are struck off the medical register for malpractice or get a criminal conviction will risk having merit money removed from their salaries by the new awards committee, the Department of Health announced yesterday.

Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, promised to look into the possibility of removing consultant surgeon James Wisheart's A merit award following the Bristol babies case earlier this year. The top award, A+, can double a consultant's salary to over £112,000.

Yesterday, the promised crackdown on merit payments was announced by the

Health Minister, Alan Milburn, who pledged that the system would become fairer and more transparent. The present 33-strong committee, dominated by 25 consultants, will be slimmed down to 14 and the dominant place will be taken by NHS employers and patient groups.

There will be just five consultants on the panel, which is known as the Advisory Committee on Distinction Awards.

The changes were being made because of widespread concern about cronyism — fears that consultants were rewarding their friends — secrecy and the small number of awards that reach women and doctors from ethnic minorities.

Revelations about Mr Wisheart's award, which he received while his conduct

was under investigation, increased suspicions.

The Government was committed to rewarding merit, said Mr Milburn. "The current scheme fails that test. These proposals have been drawn up to ensure that the award is fair, open and properly geared to the needs of a modern health service."

"Since the scheme costs the NHS over £100 million a year it must command public confidence. It needs to modernise in response to the criticism that it is part of an old pals act which does not bestow awards fairly."

The committee will have the power to review and if necessary withdraw the awards following criminal convictions, GMC findings, disciplinary action or findings of the new Commission for Health Improvements.

The department's legal advisers are still searching for a way to remove Mr Wisheart's award.

Consultants who have done well in hard-pressed areas of the NHS will be as eligible as those who star in the more academic settings of the big teaching hospitals. Under the present system, the latter are more likely to be rewarded.

Malcolm Currow, of the Bristol Heart Children's Action Group which represents the parents of children who died in operations performed by Mr Wisheart and his colleague, Janardan Dhasman, welcomed the changes.

"It is unacceptable in this day and age to have a committee made up of primarily a large number of doctors giving each other merit awards which they then keep. In this case, to be given a merit

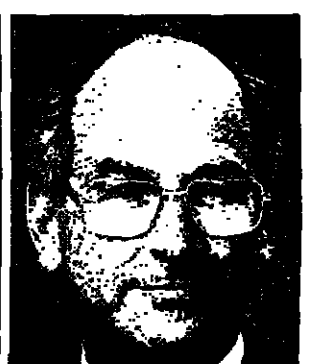
award while under investigation for the events of Bristol seems absolutely ludicrous," he said on BBC radio.

But he added: "While we cannot necessarily see him have any retrospective salary cut, I think it is important that the future is looked at."

"As Mr Wisheart has been found guilty of professional misconduct, at least the merit award element of his pay, which is about £35,000, should be reduced."

Peter Hawker, joint deputy chairman of the BMA central consultants and specialists committee, said he welcomed moves to make the system more open and fair.

But Dr Hawker added: "Contrary to what ministers have said, distinction awards are not regarded as a right by consultants, nor are they bonus payments. They are part



Surgeon James Wisheart: Merit award sparked row

of the consultants remuneration scheme and we shall be discussing with ministers how best to ensure that the money available is fairly distributed."

Leeson's operation for cancer brought forward

Helen Carter

NICK Leeson was recovering in a Singapore hospital yesterday after an operation to remove a cancerous tumour from his colon was carried out two days early.

The jailed futures trader had been due to have surgery today, but it was brought forward to Sunday because he was suffering abdominal pain and sickness. Part of his colon and part of his large intestine were removed.

Leeson was diagnosed last week as having colon cancer which has spread to lymph nodes.

After the operation at Changi general hospital, a British High Commission official who visited him said he was awake and able to talk.

His London-based solicitor, Stephen Pollard, said in a statement that he understood from the High Commission "that the surgeon considers the operation to have gone well. There are no plans for any of Mr Leeson's family to visit him immediately."

He said it was not yet known if further operations would be necessary, but doctors would be assessing the in the next few days whether further operations were necessary.

Leeson, aged 31, was jailed for 6½ years for fraud in 1995 after he lost \$850 million gambling on Far East financial markets and broke Barings merchant bank.

After his cancer was diagnosed he was moved to a secure ward at the hospital from Changi prison hospital.

His Singapore lawyer, John Koh, has launched an appeal on medical and compassionate grounds for Leeson to be allowed to complete his sentence in a British jail, but under Singapore law his sentence can be commuted only by President Ong Teng Cheong.

The process may be speeded



Nick Leeson... had early surgery because he was suffering from abdominal pain

up in view of the serious nature of his condition.

It is highly unusual for someone of Leeson's age to suffer from this type of cancer. At the weekend it emerged that Leeson's father, William, aged 59, has cancer of the blood, which killed Leeson's mother, Anne.

Mr Leeson senior, a retired plasterer of Watford, Hertfordshire, is too sick to travel

to Singapore to see his son.

"We know it is serious, very serious," he told the Sunday Telegraph.

"Nick has got to fight, and Nick will fight; he is a lot like his dad and mother in that respect. But it would make life so much easier for us if he was in prison over here."

The family hope his sister Sarah, aged 21, will fly to Singapore this month.



Today's dapper Avenger... Uma Thurman with her E-type Jaguar in a film scene

Avengers bypass critics

Janine Gibson on a blockbuster expected to leave cinemagoers shaken and stirred

IF NO one else connected with The Avengers can feel proud when it finally opens on Friday at cinemas around the world, at least the public relations team should be popping the corks.

Despite no preview screenings, no celebrity premiere and the apparent reclusiveness of the film's stars, The Avengers is going great guns in the advance publicity box office.

The film's distributor, Warner Brothers, took the rare decision not to let the critics in before the public. "It smacks of desperation," said a rival yesterday.

Restricting criticism will not necessarily hurt the movie's opening weekend.

The Avengers has generated an extraordinary level of pre-launch press coverage considering no one has seen it and the stars are incommunicado.

A press officer in Warner Distribution's London headquarters admitted yesterday that the team had been gearing up "for most of the year", but "doing more and more as

the release date approaches". The British broadsheet newspapers have carried 15 separate features about The Avengers since August.

Plus there is the small matter of roughly a dozen magazine covers, a limited edition PVC bra (called the Sex-A-Peel), a special line of clothes in Miss Selfridge, and a top 10 single.

And why let the absence of a cat-suited Uma Thurman or a Saville Row suited Ralph Fiennes spoil a good party?

The lack of a premiere did not deter Warner from throwing an Avengers party last night at the Leopard Lounge in Fulham Broadway, west London.

Around 600 celebrities from the worlds of fashion and music were dressed in pin-stripe or leather to "Be Bold, Be Brave, Be Steed or Peel", as the invitation instructed.

Unfortunately, the nearest guest list got to an Avengers star was Joseph Fiennes — brother of Ralph.

The carefully constructed Warner Brothers campaign began in January when two

pictures of a leathered-up Ms Thurman were circulated to the press. These were given out "much earlier than you normally would do to build anticipation" says the press officer.

Ian George, WB director of marketing, protests he has not engineered coverage that interest was at fever pitch already.

"The film was shot here, so there was a lot of stuff that was breaking from the set. It was unusual because we don't distribute a lot of films which have been shot in the UK. Then of course there's the popularity of the TV series."

"We're not generating interest, we're trying to hold it back. Our job on these type of films is just to control it because everyone's interested."

Genius or folly, Warner's has certainly held its nerve.

A rival PR believes it to be genius. "Even if the film is the next Citizen Kane, it will get bad reviews here because The Avengers is part of the British cultural heritage. On the understanding that even if you'd created the best film of all time you're going to get a slugging, it's probably worth getting the media a little bit upset by not releasing it to critics."

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Embassy bombing aftermath

Grief unites Kenyans as toll mounts

David Gough in Nairobi

AS VOLUNTEERS and rescue teams continued yesterday to dig their way through the devastation caused by the bomb attack in central Nairobi, the people of Kenya set about coming to terms with the single worst act of violence in their history.

The attack, which came at 10.35 on Friday morning, is now known to have killed more than 180 people and injured 5,000. It is believed that 100 are still missing.

Nairobi University students marched to the site of the blast yesterday, singing "Who has made this bomb, and why have they attacked us?"

Seferinus Okoth, one of the students, said he hoped something positive might yet come out of the tragedy. "I think this will bring the people of Kenya together," he said.

In the rubble of the Ufundi Co-operative building, which bore the brunt of the blast, Israeli and French emergency teams continued digging.

Lieutenant-Colonel Ofer Lerner of the Israeli team said the smell of decomposing corpses was getting worse by the hour.

A woman known as Rose, who was believed to have been the last person left alive in the building, was said to have made contact with an Israeli team in the early hours of yesterday morning, but no word had been heard from her since.

A French rescue worker said Rose was almost certainly dead. "Maybe there are others still inside that we have not yet heard," he said, "but frankly I doubt it."

On Sunday a team of Israeli engineers from the Co-operative Bank House with Grace Odida and her son Gabriel, aged nine. Their escape was widely lauded as a miracle. But a senior Red Cross worker told the Guardian that

the pair had only entered the building after the bomb exploded, and that Ms Odida had been leaving it at regular intervals to fetch food and water from the volunteers outside.

Samuel Nguni, who was rescued from the building on Saturday night, yesterday spoke about his ordeal from his hospital bed. He said he had lost track of time. "An hour seemed like a day."

Outside the hospital, relatives were still poring over lists of the casualties posted on the wall, a now familiar sight at Nairobi's hospitals. People unable to find their relations are told to look in the city mortuary, choked with 107 victims of the attack.

On Saturday, Beatrice Odhiambo identified the body of her husband Timothy. Yesterday she was back at the mortuary to arrange to take the body for burial. His death funds undermined security at United States embassies around the world and may have compromised the safety of staff in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam, according to the author of a report into embassy safety.

Bobby Inman, who headed a commission set up in 1985

after US embassies in Kuwait and Beirut were bombed along with a marine barracks in Beirut, blamed Congress and the state department for failing to follow recommendations he made 13 years ago.

Neither of the embassies bombed on Friday met standards outlined on his list, nor had they been placed on a state department priority list for a security upgrade.

"I think that congressional support eroded over time," Mr Inman said. "But I also think State [the state department], as their budget pressures got higher, cut back on what they requested."

The under-secretary of state, Thomas Pickering, said that congressional representatives who originally rebuffed President Bill Clinton's demands for money to improve security worldwide had been trying to make



A US air force member is overcome as he waits for the coffin of 11 Americans, being flown to Germany and then to Andrews air force base in Washington PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN MCCONNICO

Congress cut corners on mission safety, says expert

Gary Young in Washington

ALACK of political will and congressional oversight have undermined security at United States embassies around the world and may have compromised the safety of staff in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam, according to the author of a report into embassy safety.

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The under-secretary of state, Thomas Pickering, said that congressional representatives who originally rebuffed President Bill Clinton's demands for money to improve security worldwide had been trying to make

amends since the bombings. US embassies are subject to 30,000 threats annually, Mr Pickering said, and staff in each embassy have "to review their security situation as a matter of record each year."

Mr Inman's commission had recommended that US embassies should be set back 75ft from the street, surrounded by walls and be far more heavily fortified. He believes the changes

were not made because of a lack of political will after the bombings subsided in the late 1980s, and economic considerations.

"A good many years transpired without embassies being attacked and support for the programme clearly eroded. That, and getting down to a balanced budget,"

The secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, said that all embassies built since 1985 have conformed

to the standards called for by Mr Inman's commission. "We have also tried in a systematic way to upgrade the embassies around the world by making sure that the perimeters are secure,"

she said. "There was a lot of work done on the embassy in Nairobi, but we cannot move every embassy or location in the world now. We don't have the money or the resources to do that."

Hijacking links Rwanda to Congo rebels

Howard French in Bujumbura

NEW DETAILS emerging from the hijacking of a commercial jet last week in Congo suggest that the country's eastern neighbour, Rwanda, has strongly backed, and perhaps actively led, efforts to bring down the government of President Laurent Kabila.

The hijacked plane was used on Tuesday to fly rebel troops from rebel-held areas in the west across Congo to the east, where they opened a second front in the insurrection against Mr Kabila.

In an account of the boldest rebel operation in the week-old insurrection, Congo's official radio station on Sunday morning, a Nigerian commercial pilot said he had flown the commandeered plane. After take-off from the eastern rebel-held city of

Goma, he said he was ordered to land in the Rwandan capital, Kigali, to refuel.

In the cockpit with him throughout the flight, directing the operation at gunpoint, the pilot said, was James Kabarehe, the Rwandan commander who is widely believed to have led the rebel armies that defeated the long-time dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko, and installed Mr Kabila in power in Kinshasa, the Congo capital, 15 months ago.

Until recently, when Mr Kabila dismissed him in the midst of a growing rift with Rwanda, Commander Kabarehe was on loan from that country as the interim chief of staff of the new Congolese army being assembled by Mr Kabila.

"If the pilot's story holds up, this has all the markings of a world-class double-cross," a European diplomat said. "Kabila depended upon the Rwandans so completely

that they know his situation inside and out. Now they are using that knowledge against him."

The Nigerian pilot, Raymond Gbang, is an employee of the Congolese company Air Atlantic, whose passenger jet happened to be in Goma when the rebels seized the city.

Mr Gbang said that not one

military base at Kitona, south-west of Kinshasa, where the arriving rebels exchanged fire with troops stationed at the base.

The pilot said Cmdr Kabarehe had been accompanied on his aircraft by at least 180 soldiers, each with his own assault rifle, and by crates of weapons. Another aircraft

used in the operation, a Boeing-707 belonging to Congo Air Lines, carried at least 400 troops, he said.

After dropping off the insurgents, the pilot said, the planes took off again, with orders to head east.

"Instead of flying back to Kigali, as I was told by Cmdr

Kabarehe, I flew to Lagos, in Nigeria, where I am from, with two wounded aboard," Mr Gbang said from Kinshasa, where he has since returned. "I did not want to be an accomplice of the rebels."

Since landing at Kitona, Congolese government officials say, the rebels have managed to rally to their side many of the hundreds of troops from the defeated army of Mobutu, who were being retrained there for Mr Kabila's army by Rwandan instructors until Mr Kabila ordered the Rwandans to go home two weeks ago.

The rebels already control most of the far eastern part of the country. But in the last few days, Western diplomats say, they have moved from the Kitona base to seize two important towns, Banana and Moanda, which control access to the country's only seaport, Matadi.

In the latest fighting, though, the rebels are reported to be encountering strong government resistance about 160 miles south-west of Kinshasa.

Regional experts say the latest fighting was prompted apparently by a feeling in Rwanda, as well as in Uganda and Angola, two other key sponsors of Mr Kabila's own uprising, that his government was doing too little to stop cross-border incursions into those countries by rebels who use Congolese territory for rear bases.

The hijacked pilot's account came on a day when the Congolese authorities gave details of what they said was substantial foreign involvement in the rebellion. In addition to Rwanda, the Kabila government has accused Uganda of sending troops and tanks into north-eastern Congo in support of the rebels. — *New York Times*

Yeltsin fixes Mir visit for ex-aide

James Meek in Moscow

WORKING your way up to being a bespectacled bureaucrat flying a desk in the bowels of the Kremlin does not appear to be the best way to fulfil your boyhood dream of becoming a cosmonaut.

But it worked for Yuri Buturin. The best way to live out your fantasies in Russia, it seems, is by getting close enough to the president, Boris Yeltsin, to broach the subject.

A year after Mr Yeltsin fixed it for him, the one-time senior Kremlin defence aide who always wanted to fly into orbit is sitting at Baikonur cosmodrome, waiting to become one of the last men to travel to the Mir space station. "I have long dreamed of working in space," Mr Buturin, aged 48, said earlier this year. "I am sure this is very hard work for strong men."

There was scepticism last year when news first trickled out that Mr Buturin, an owl figure then working as secretary of the president's defence council, was to be sent into space. Doubts deepened when Mr Buturin denied it and was demoted a few days later.

In February he was dismissed altogether as a Yeltsin aide, although he still remains

on the government's payroll. But the civil servant popped up at Star City, the cosmonaut training village outside Moscow, and was pronounced fit to fly. He will blast off from Baikonur, in a space suit specially tailored to fit him, with two professional cosmonauts on Thursday.

There was speculation that Mr Buturin, who for a short time led attempts to reform Russia's elephantine post-Soviet military, might be going to the ageing space station as a kind of cosmic health and safety inspector.

But a government decision has been taken to end Mr Buturin's life next year and beyond a handful of scientific experiments he is due to carry out, there seems little reason for Mr Buturin flying to the space station for a mere nine day stay, except that he wanted to go.

What makes his trip, thought to be costing in excess of \$10 million, even more mysterious is that the government has been taken to end Mr Buturin's life next year and beyond a handful of scientific experiments he is due to carry out, there seems little reason for Mr Buturin flying to the space station for a mere nine day stay, except that he wanted to go.

Mr Buturin is not a complete stranger to space. He worked at Energiya in the 1970s, when Mir was being designed, and seems to have been nurturing his dreams of spaceflight ever since.

Islanders vote on split after St Kitts gets their goat

The 9,000 citizens of St Nevis look set for independence, writes Gary Young in Washington

VOTERS in the tiny Caribbean island of St Nevis went to the polls yesterday to decide whether to split from their only slightly larger neighbour to become the newest and one of the smallest countries in the world.

A two-thirds "Yes" vote, which is widely expected, would bring independence for 9,000 Nevisians and end an awkward 115-year relationship with the 32,000-strong population of St Kitts.

"The people of St Nevis want to be in control of their affairs. That is the issue at hand. There is no other issue," Vance Amory, the island's premier and force behind the secessionist movement, told about 150 supporters at a Charlestown rally on Sunday.

Nevisians complain that they are treated as second-class citizens by their big brother, and seem committed to going it alone. Most prominent business-people, pundits, politicians and church leaders favour secession.

Under the present constitution, the federation government, which is predominantly Kittitian, controls foreign policy, national taxation, security and defence for both islands. St Nevis's administration, through its elected parliament and premier, is responsible for all other issues on the island.

The independence drive has raised alarm in the Caribbean and in the United States. Officials privately say that a breakaway island could be vulnerable to drug cartels, unable to pay international bills, and could become a liability to a fledgling Caribbean trade bloc.

The prime minister of St Kitts and St Nevis, Denzil Douglas, believes Nevisians are being shortsighted. "A veritable Pandora's box of problems would come cascading down on the people of St Kitts and Nevis," he said. "Let us not fight against the current of history."

Opponents of secession say the islands' fates are inextricably linked. Half of all Kittitians were born in Nevis. Ninety per cent of Nevis's consumer goods and most of its tourists come through St Kitts. And how, they ask, does an island of only 36 square miles plan to navigate the new world order without being buffeted by supranational trade blocs and international political alliances?

But Mr Amory believes St Kitts has shortchanged St Nevis. St Nevis contributes 38 per cent of the eastern Caribbean country's budget, but receives only 21 per cent.

The difference between the islands is striking. St Kitts



Rush hour in Charlestown, the seat of power for what is likely to be the world's newest country PHOTOGRAPH: ALEX HAMILTON

has many modern roads, while St Nevis has a single pitted road ringing the island. St Kitts has a new international airport in the capital, Basseterre; Nevis has a runway that can cope only with two-engine planes.

Mr Amory claims St Nevis is better equipped for independence than some former Soviet republics. It boasts a fledgling offshore financial industry, a stable currency tied to the US dollar, and a growing tourist trade.

Size, he insists, is not important. "Small is not an indication of capability," he said. "A number of large countries

in the world are worse off." The secessionist drive began after the Pepsi distributor on St Kitts emerged in 1994 as a suspected cocaine baron, targeted by US and British drug enforcement officials. Nevisians grew tired of the poor company they were keeping.

Both islands were originally part of a three-nation strong federation created by the British in 1883. The federation's third member, Anguilla, pulled out in 1967 and declared its re-dependence on Britain. St Kitts and St Nevis declared full independence from Britain in 1983.

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News in brief

Kosovo rebels kill 10 Serbs

Ethnic Albanian guerrillas killed 10 policemen in the Serbian province of Kosovo, Serb police said, as diplomatic efforts continued yesterday in Pristina to end the violence.

The US ambassador, Chris Hill, who has been working to try to bring the Serb and ethnic Albanian sides together, was in the provincial capital Pristina to see Ibrahim Rugova, leader of the Kosovo Albanians, and the Yugoslav deputy prime minister, Nikola Saljovic. — *Reuters*

McDougal trial

Susan McDougal, who with her former husband, the late Arkansas banker Tim McDougal, were the Clintons' partners in the bankrupt Arkansas Whitewater land deal and were convicted of fraud, went on trial yesterday accused of stealing \$150,000 (\$92,000) from the conductor Zubin Mehta and his wife, Nancy, writes Christopher Reed in Los Angeles. She faces being jailed again for alleged offences in

the late 1980s, when she was the Mehtas' bookkeeper.

Bear necessity

Two young male polar bears were shot dead in the Arctic Svalbard islands as they searched for food in a camp of 17 British tourists and scientists. Both bears were killed because they refused to go away, even after shots to scare them. — *AP*

Apology to Sami

Sweden's reindeer-herding Sami people have won an apology from the government for centuries of oppression, being pushed off their land and denied access to their language. The 70,000 Sami, who dislike the names Laplander and Lapp, want rights as an indigenous people. — *Reuters*

Bare it and grin
A Swedish teacher who stripped naked to give her class of adult, unemployed women self-confidence has won her legal battle for compensation for unfair dismissal. She was awarded 100,000 crowns (about \$11,500) damages. — *Reuters*

Taliban army menaces Central Asia

The battle for northern Afghanistan is alarming neighbouring states, reports **Richard Galpin** in Kabul

ISLAMIC Taliban forces were yesterday reported to have advanced towards the strategic town of Hairaton, near the border with Uzbekistan, triggering alarm among neighbouring Central Asian states.

Tajikistan, supported by Russian troops, began reinforcing its border to prevent the fighting spilling over from northern Afghanistan. Tajikistan's government has been put on alert while Tajik and Russian troops are reportedly taking "urgent measures".

Russia has retained 25,000 troops on station in Tajikistan, permanently guarding the border. Their patrols have been strengthened, the border guard chief, Nikolai Reznichenko, told the Interfax news agency yesterday.

In some areas the Taliban have advanced to within 12 to 25 miles from the Tajik border, the Tajik deputy prime minister, Abdurakhmonov Azimov, said yesterday. Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan — which border Afghanistan — as well as nearby Kyrgyzstan, have several governments wary of the fundamentalist Taliban. They have been sympathetic to the now weakened opposition in the north of Afghanistan.

Russia also fears the entrenchment of a radical Islamic state in Afghanistan, which could bring an influx of refugees and arms into the former Soviet republics of Central Asia. It has belatedly begun funding its former Afghan enemies in the hope of defeating the fundamentalist advance.

The Taliban's rapidly developing offensive, which began with the defection of opposition warlords, has abruptly ended the stalemate in Afghanistan.

istan's protracted civil war. Two years after capturing the country's devastated capital, Kabul, Taliban militia were yesterday consolidating their hold over the headquarters of the opposition alliance in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif.

Following a massed assault on Saturday and two days of fighting in the streets, independent sources reported yesterday that Taliban forces controlled the entire city.

Eyewitnesses reported seeing bodies lying in the roads, but said the city was quiet. A handful of people even ventured out after spending more than 48 hours hiding inside their homes as the battle raged around them.

The government of Tajikistan is on alert while Tajik and Russian troops are reportedly taking 'urgent measures'

Confirmation of the city's fall came from the opposition, who admitted early on Monday morning that Taliban troops were in full control of the city.

Even so, an opposition spokesman vowed that their forces would regroup and counter attack. The forces of the opposition Shi'ite party Hizbe Wahadat are among the strongest in the area and are reported to be around the south of the city. But so far there is no reliable information on whether they are preparing to try and recapture Mazar-i-Sharif.

Meanwhile, Taliban troops have pressed forward their advance, heading north into the remaining opposition territory. On Monday a Taliban official claimed they had nearly reached the Hairaton close to Uzbekistan.

It is estimated that this devastating offensive which began in July, has extended the Taliban's control to at least three-quarters of the country. The opposition have been left with just a handful of provinces in the north-eastern and central regions, controlled by the different parties of the alliance, which will be isolated and vulnerable to further attack from the Taliban.

Even the Panjshir valley, controlled by the opposition commander, Ahmed Shah Massoud, and believed to be almost impregnable, could be blockaded if the Taliban's advance continues.

But it is unclear what the Taliban strategy will be — whether they will push on as far as possible, or slow down the offensive and consolidate before finding themselves over-stretched.

Last year in similar attacks on Mazar-i-Sharif, the Taliban marched into the city only to be forced out again within days as they had failed to ensure the loyalty of the heavily armed factions still in the area.

The Taliban's series of military victories in the north are also causing mounting concern in neighbouring Islamic countries.

Iran, which is widely believed to provide political and military support to the opposition — in particular the Shi'ite parties — on Monday evacuated nine diplomats who had been based in the opposition stronghold of Bamian, in central Afghanistan, in a move



Forces of the Shi'ite opposition party Hizbe Wahadat gather in Bamian before leaving to defend Mazar-i-Sharif against the Taliban PHOTOGRAPH: EMMA NATANALE

which Tehran described as precautionary.

It follows the disappearance of 11 Iranian diplomats from Mazar-i-Sharif on Saturday. Tehran has accused the Taliban of taking them prisoner and called for their immediate release. The Taliban denies abducting them, but their whereabouts are still unknown.

According to one unconfirmed report, they have been taken to the Taliban's headquarters in the southern city of Kandahar.

The Taliban have, however, said that they have arrested more than 30 other Iranian nationals, after accusing them

of helping transport military equipment to the opposition parties. A Taliban spokesman said it was possible they would be taken to Kandahar for interrogation.

Uzbekistan is willing to allow humanitarian aid across its territory into Afghanistan, but appears reluctant to accept refugees from its southern neighbour, a senior United Nations official said on Monday.

Uzbekistan and Russia issued a statement last week condemning the Taliban attacks and stating that former Soviet states bordering Af-

ghanistan had the right to take any necessary measures to strengthen their borders.

The Red Cross in Kazakhstan's commercial capital, Almaty, the organisation's regional headquarters, said that workers in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan were on alert.

"We are on alert now," Yayoi Hayashi, a Red Cross representative for population movement in Central Asia, said. "The Red Crescent Society branch offices in those areas are watching the situation in Afghanistan very carefully."



Trial threatens Turkish scandal

Chris Morris in Ankara

THE trial of 11 men for the attempted murder of Turkey's leading human rights activist, Alcin Birdal, threatens to expose a scandal linking rightwing extremists and state security agencies.

The trial began last week in dramatic fashion when the alleged ringleader of the plot, Cengiz Ersever, threatened prosecution lawyers, and boasted that he could have killed Mr Birdal within 24 hours if that had been his intention. The trial was then adjourned until later this month, and Mr Ersever was dragged kicking and screaming from the court.

He served for five years as a senior army officer fighting Kurdish guerrillas in south-eastern Turkey and, he said, since 1996 he had organised the training of recruits to the far-right Turkish Revenge Brigade, an armed group.

Mr Birdal, who survived the assassination attempt in May, when six bullets hit his chest and legs, believes the trial could bring significant revelations. "This is not a simple criminal case," he said. "It is a symbol of the illegal activities which take place within the state system."

The prosecution claims the attack was carried out on the instructions of an ultra-nationalist militant, Mahmut Yildirim, who is known by the code name Yesil, or Green. He is thought to be a key player in what has been called the Susuruk affair.

The first hint of scandal came in November 1996. A senior police officer, a wanted gangster and a former beauty queen were killed when their car crashed in the western town of Susuruk. An MP who works closely with the security forces in south-eastern Turkey survived. He and the former interior minister are now facing criminal charges.

Public demand for an investigation of the links between the state and the extreme right led to the publication this year of most of an official report. It confirmed that senior security officials had used rightwing gangs to kill opponents. In return, there was leniency over drug smuggling, extortion rackets and money laundering in casinos.

Further investigations into the casino business, which is now banned in Turkey, and the supply of forged official documents are continuing but progress has been slow.

Many people believe Turkey's powerful military and the state security agency, MIT, have been reluctant to help the Susuruk inquiry. Without their co-operation, little can be achieved.

Political attention on the scandal may decrease further now that a decision has been taken to hold an early general election next April. Nevertheless, many of the details are out in the open, and that in itself is significant. "It can't be swept under the carpet now. We know too much," said Sedat Ergin, the Ankara editor of the Hurriyet newspaper.

Into the valley of death... jaywalk the British soldiers

The Light Brigade's Crimean battlefield provides a training ground for Nato, to Russia's chagrin, writes **Tom Whitehouse** in Sevastopol

THIS was no ordinary traffic offence. Twenty-three British soldiers in uniform had not jaywalked down the road linking Balaklava and the Inkerman Plains since the Crimean war of the 1850s.

"What's going on here?" asked an agitated Crimean policeman.

A new charge of the Light Brigade? An advance party of invading Nato troops?

"They're British," an interpreter replied. "They're learning about their war history here, and they have permission." "Ah, I suppose that's all right then," said the policeman, overlooking the men's illegally-parked coach before returning to cigarette-smoking duty in his car.

The Crimean authorities have not always been so understanding. When Lieutenant-Colonel Patrick Mercer, a distinguished historian of the Crimean conflict, visited Sevastopol five years ago, it was a closed military city where Russia's Black Sea fleet was held away. Suspected of spying, he was briefly arrested while his claim to be an official guest was verified.

But the Crimea has moved into the 21st century and Col Mercer and 32 officers from the Fibrbright Training Regiment in Surrey are welcome to

retrace the steps of their 19th century predecessors. Ethnic Russian politicians still threaten to secede from Ukraine and join Russia, but the Kremlin has more pressing concerns closer to home.

Crimea became Ukrainian territory after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Ethnic Russians still account for 62 per cent of the population and the rusting fleet has a 20-year lease on Sevastopol harbour. But the Ukraine government owns the freedom and is keen to flaunt a new friendship with Nato.

The British soldiers' visit is ostensibly a training mission. But it helps to further relations with the Ukrainians.

an military, an enthusiastic participant in Partnership for Peace, Nato's new deal with the former Soviet states, which Russia has snubbed.

Britain and the United States are investing millions in training the Ukraine army as they try to widen Nato's embrace.

"There is a huge openness in Ukraine which is very attractive," Col Mercer said.

"Tread with reverence please, this is a tomb," said Col Mercer as he walked across a mass grave of Russian soldiers killed by his regimental ancestors 143 years ago.

But as his soldiers posed beside a Russian Orthodox cross for photographs there was an undisguised triumphalism in Col Mercer's account of British heroism which would have been unthinkable were Crimea still controlled by the Russians.

"Twenty Muscovites

stabbed him with their bayonets. Then a Russian officer left him for dead, but he survived," he said, describing one British officer's Crimean exploits.

The fatal charge of the Light Brigade, when more than 600 British soldiers were slaughtered by Russian gunners in 20 minutes, is dismissed as "an alleged Russian victory". After all, Britain and its allies won the Crimean war.

But this is not only a junket. The fighting at Inkerman, which brought a British revival after the Light Brigade debacle, engaged thousands of troops at close quarters on a hilly area the size of six football pitches. Intelligence and communications were paramount, as they are today in modern peacekeeping and peace-enforcing operations.

"It may seem odd, but in some respects the lessons of

a 19th-century battle are more valuable for the modern soldier than those of a 20th-century battle," said Col Mercer.

To Russia, the visit is overwhelmingly political. Nato is accused of sowing dissent between Ukraine and its big Slavic brother. By recalling a famous allied victory over Russia, British soldiers are inadvertently celebrating the West's victory in the cold war.

"It's the same now as it was in 1854," said Viktor Yadukha, the Ukraine correspondent for the Moscow newspaper Sevodnya.

"As a result of the Russian defeat then, Moscow was denied access to the Black Sea and to the Mediterranean beyond. Now Russia does not have the money to pay for its Black Sea fleet and its control over Crimea is slipping from its grasp."

China and Korea on new flood alert as river levels rise

Foreign Staff

CHINA and South Korea brace themselves for a fresh surge of flooding as heavy rain sent waters rising to record levels on the swollen Yangtze river and hampered the search for survivors of the deluge in and around Seoul, which has left 234 people dead and 91 people missing.

Residents of China's central Hubei province and People's Liberation Army troops scrambled to shore up flood defences after the prime minister, Zhu Rongji, warned that more dikes were in danger of bursting.

"The flood situation is very serious on the Yangtze river," China Daily quoted Mr Zhu as saying during a tour of the Hubei city of Jingzhou.

"There is a high possibility of cave-ins and crumbling along the main river dikes because of the long soaking period," he said.

The prime minister's words amounted to the strongest government warning yet about the floods, which have killed more than 2,000 people and knocked agriculture and industry at a time of flagging economic growth.

The last official estimate, several weeks ago, said the floods had caused \$3 billion

worth of damage and had cut the summer grain harvest by 11 million tonnes.

In South Korea, a disaster agency official said he feared the death toll would rise further as the weather office forecast that the capital, Seoul, and most northern areas of the country would receive between 4.5in and 8.75in of rainfall overnight.

"The damage will be enormous if rain pounds again as the weather bureau forecast," the official said.

"There is a possibility that unexpected landslides hit by torrential rains will increase the death toll."

The Korea meteorological administration said residents in northern areas should remain on alert overnight.

There is no let up in sight. The weather bureau forecast that sporadic showers would probably continue throughout the week.

Floods and mudslides hit the south of the country more than a week ago, before heavy rain caused havoc in Seoul and the north.

The disaster has left more than 121,000 South Koreans homeless. They were sheltered in schools, churches and town halls, the national disaster prevention headquarters said.

About 115,000 acres of farmland — mostly rice fields —



A man takes his pet monkey for a swim in flood waters in Dhaka, Bangladesh, yesterday. PHOTOGRAPH: ENAMUL HUQ

had been flooded while 36 roads and three railway lines remained closed, the disaster agency said. More than 44,000 homes and buildings were damaged, along with 779 roads and bridges.

In Bangladesh, more than 300 people have been killed and millions marooned by heavy rain. Flood water has started receding, but monitors say it will take months for the land to dry out fully.

Meanwhile, in Cyprus, 48 people, mainly elderly, have died and hundreds have been

treated for dehydration and sunstroke over the past three days as a scorching heatwave has gripped the island.

Most of the deaths occurred in the south-eastern coastal region of Larnaca, where abnormally high temperatures have combined with high humidity, the Cypriot health ministry said.

Temperatures in Nicosia, the capital of the Mediterranean island, have climbed to 43C (109F), about five degrees higher than normal for the time of year.

Poisoned green tea strikes down 10 Japanese workers

Jonathan Watts in Tokyo

JAPANESE police launched an investigation yesterday into the second suspected case of mass poisoning in two weeks, after 10 people suffered palpitations, nausea and temporary blindness within minutes of drinking green tea.

The case has grabbed the headlines as a possible copycat crime. Four people died last month in Wakayama after eating curry laced with arsenic and cyanide.

The latest victims — all employees of Xylene, a company that produces wood preservatives in Niigata prefecture, northern Japan — were struck down during their morning break. They were drinking tea made from water that had been left in an urn over the weekend.

Complaining of symptoms that also included dizziness and numb hands and feet, they were taken to local hospitals for emergency treat-

ment. Although they were said to be in a stable condition last night, they have been kept in hospital for observation. The victims of the Wakayama poisoning died after they appeared to be recovering.

Doctors are still unsure what type of poison was used, although traces of cyanide have been found.

Police have set up a task force to investigate. "It could be a copycat crime, imitating what happened in Wakayama," a spokesman for the National Police Agency said.

"There's no way it could be routine food poisoning — green tea doesn't give you food poisoning."

In the Wakayama case, neighbourhood feuds were seen as a possible motive for the crime, but Xylene moved quickly to quash similar speculation. "As far as I know there was no discord within the office," a company spokesman said.

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Comment

Diary

Simon Bowers

LAST week, you recall, we left a young Gus Macdonald, the proud socialist editor of Young Guard, outdaring his newspaper's commitment to the democratic electoral process. Today we find him advising readers thinking of attending the Third Young Socialist Rally at the Derbyshire Miners' Holiday Camp in 1993: "As a veteran of the two previous rallies I'll try to give some useful hints to first-timers." How thoughtful, Gus. "The sex-starved can rejoice, for the sea air and release from parental bondage has a remarkable effect on the virginal in both sexes. Rampant males have the advantage here for there are hundreds of beautiful birds working out the summer in the camp." Sounds fun. But what of discussing socialist ideals with eminent speakers all night long? "It is advisable to avoid Jimmy's bar in the main building during the visits of prominent speakers for you are in danger of being trampled in the crush of rightwing sycophants who haunt the premises — awaiting opportunities to force their attentions on anyone in or near parliament." Deploable cynicism, Gus. Utterly deplorable.

TALKING of cynicism, Derek Draper has expressed dismay — on the page opposite last Friday — over his national association with the subject. Central to his defence appears to be his lack of interest in the game of football. However a sharp-eyed reader and Chester City fan suggests this might be questionable. One Derek Draper, it seems, before reinventing himself as New Labour's very own Arthur Daley, was in fact a key player for CFC's promotion-winning team of 1975-6. "I've played 40 odd matches a season for Chester, and I have usually been hurt staying free of injury," boasted Derek in the *Topical Times Football Book* of that year. "But I still take my own training gear home to wash it."

POLICE surveillance is a delicate business, so it was with some surprise that Tim Cane, an intelligence officer from Bristol, chose — let's call her "Mrs X" — to save embarrassment — to help him monitor the movements of a gang of suspected drug dealers in her neighbourhood. And an uneventful stake-out conducted from Mrs X's living room, reports Police magazine. Tim suggested that it might be helpful if she could, in his absence, collect registration numbers of cars visiting the premises in question. A few days later Mrs X rang in to report that she had done as instructed. When Tim returned to Mrs X's, she presented him with a pile of number plates she had unscrewed from the suspects' vehicles. Good work Mrs X, one day you'll make a great contender for our *Fe Brains* award.

THE Diary's People-Friendly Guide to New Labour Lexion has, we fear, been sabotaged by a small cell of undesirable readers who have been inundating us with unhelpful letters. Sadly our search for meaning in John Prescott's phrase "traditional values in a modern setting" has been derailed by this sinister campaign. However, before moving on, an example must be made of one of these militants. Mrs S Evans of Gwent-on-Spey: "capitalism is a new train", and "paint your Establishment pink", are unhelpful suggestions, and it is with reluctance that we send you the promised Champagne. This week's phrase to be defined is "equality of opportunity, not equality of outcome". Chompers for helpful suggestions only.

THE 23-year-old Mark Leonard of Demos think tank, much loved for his Cool Britannia pamphlet, Rebranding Britain, has endeared himself to the nation yet again with another remarkable display of respectful sensitivity for one so young. "We are sending researchers out on to the street," he told the *Sunday Telegraph*, "to talk to tramps and ask them why they feel left out of society." Homeless persons wishing to help can e-mail him on squirt@demos.co.uk



You're so naive, Ms Wilkinson. New Labour lads aren't the real threat

Madeleine Bunting



NEW Labour has committed a new crime: too many lads playing football at the heart of government. It's been enough to finish Helen Wilkinson's love affair with New Labour, or so she told us in a long New Statesman article which got surprisingly extensive coverage last week.

Part of the curiosity in the piece was its confusion of the personal and the political. The romantic metaphors she used appeared to be courting a surely unwelcome publicity into her relationship with her former lover, Geoff Mulgan — one of the very new lads against whom the article appeared to be targeted. She even goes so far as to present such undermining of her critique by claiming that criticism of New Labour is dismissed by Government circles as personally motivated.

But she takes the gloves off, showing no compunction about dragging Alison Campbell's former alcoholism into her argument to accuse the Downing Street aides not only of playing football — heinous crime — but also of being dysfunctional. It calls to mind other good political insults floating around which have taken on a curiously personal complexion — "psychologically flawed". When you want to be really nasty to your political opponent, you accuse them of personality disorders.

But with all robust polemics, Wilkinson has some interesting points to make. The first is football, or how it is emblematic of a new laddish culture which is as mar-

signalling of women as the old macho Labour Party. There are not enough women at policy advisory level, she complains. There are a couple of important factual inaccuracies such as her ignoring the crucial fixing role women play in both Blair and Brown's offices, and that five women regularly join the football teams. Otherwise she's right. Not enough women. But are excellent women being overlooked? Is this about male oppression — that ideology of victimisation into which feminism too often mistakenly falls — or are there other reasons?

Take the story of two lowly parliamentary researchers working in next-door offices five years ago: one was working for Harriet Harman, the other for Gordon Brown. Yvette Cooper is now an MP. Ed Balls is one of the new lads in Downing Street. All women shortlists ensured that bright young women with political ambition were, rightly or wrongly, given a headstart in getting into parliament. Ironically in some cases, it was old Labour at its most macho which shoehorned women into constituencies. Ruth Kelly and Yvette Cooper are just two women who have shot ahead of their contemporaries because of their gender. Or take Patricia Hewitt, tipped for the Number 10 policy unit a few years ago. She's done better than that: she's the first member of the 1997 intake to get into government.

But there should be enough women to go round — parliament and Downing Street policy advisors. There should. But women tend to choose certain careers. Medicine, law, personnel and the media all attract an equal or even disproportionate number of women. In comparison, a

career in politics is unpredictable, with long and unsociable hours, and is not particularly financially rewarding (which, given the cost of child care, is important).

But I have no brief to defend New Labour. Wilkinson's central charge is that what is at stake is New Labour's vaunted ambitions to revitalise British democracy. That is a deeply serious question, which can't be trivialised by identifying the threat as a bunch of new lads. That is to believe Derek Draper's self-importance. Less sexy but far more worrying is how the National Executive Council has managed to get a stranglehold on the selection of candidates for the European elections. Or that the Labour Party is poised to bastardise the purpose of a mayor for London by manoeuvring to keep Ken Livingstone off the ballot — just as the Tories may do the same to exclude Jeffrey Archer.

Illustrates depressingly the British democratic deficit across the political spectrum. As does the disturbing delay over the Freedom of Information white paper. Or how the selection panels for seats in the Welsh and Scottish assemblies detract from the triumph of devolution. Bad blots on the copybook. But on the plus side, the jury is still out over the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights and the white paper on local government last month.

But one of the most potent factors sapping British democracy is beyond New Labour. It is in the collapse and discrediting of the Conservative. An adversarial political system doesn't work when one party is on its

knees. That was the story for much of Thatcher's 80s; the electoral pendulum swings of first-past-the-post have become so violent in the past 20 years that it has debilitated British political culture. With the Tories having little effect in denting monolithic Labour, it is not surprising that the media takes on the role of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition and pounces on any whiff of internal division. The really interesting question is not why Wilkinson fell out of love with New Labour but why she was ever in love in the first place? It speaks of a rare naivety for one of Thatcher's children, whose defining characteristic has been cynicism: either cynical apathy or the cynical craving for power which Wilkinson rightly identifies amongst the new lads. We demonstrated in the early 80s — nuclear energy, Greenham Common — and a fat lot of good it did anyone. The naivety is also rare amongst the 40-somethings running New Labour. No one of that generation could adopt the tone of wounded disillusionment of Wilkinson. There is a faultline on the left between those who remember the last Labour governments and those who don't. The 40-somethings were in their impressionable teens and early 20s when the last two Labour governments were fractured by disillusionment, the loss of ideas and bitter betrayals. The price of it was bitter internal feuding and 18 years in the wilderness. Out of that was born New Labour's politics of pragmatism and self-discipline. The cost, as well as the imperative, of "no dissent" has been obvious all along; it's a bit late to be crying about it now.

Hugo Young is away

How Gus has changed

Paul Foot



THE path from revolutionary party to House of Lords is well-beaten, but I am sad to see that the latest traveller down it is my old friend and comrade Gus Macdonald. Gus was the most persuasive and congenial of the young socialists I met in Glasgow in the early 1960s. He taught me all the basic lessons about modern British society: that it is split into classes; that one class exploits the other; that the exploited class has a duty to resist; that such resistance is incomparably more likely to change things for the better than 1,000,000 years of parliamentary politics; and that socialists must therefore organise round that resistance. Gus was a disciple of Harry Selby, a Trotskyist barber who later became Labour MP for Govan, but whose real contribution to human progress was the recycling of Marxist textbooks round a band of young working class socialists who met in a tiny shop in Weir Street in the Gorbals.

Selby held the orthodox Trotskyist view that Russia was a "degenerated workers' state" which was preferable to Western capitalism. Gus organised a weekend school at which the two main speakers were Tony Cliff (Gus's childhood friend) and Michael Kidron. These two put forward the heresy that Russia was "state capitalist". The form of Russian society — no stock exchange, an apparently planned economy — might be different to the private enterprise capitalist economies, but the content — class exploitation, control from above, the alienation of labour — was the same. At a packed meeting in that Weir Street shop, Cliff started his talk on the Soviet Union by protesting that the very term was absurd. There were no real soviets (workers' councils) so how could there be a union of them?

NOT long afterwards, while hitch-hiking to a socialist meeting in Newcastle, Gus told me he'd made up his mind. There was no alternative but to join a revolutionary organisation. He was convinced that there was nothing remotely socialist or even progressive about Russia and that therefore he would be going to London to organise for the "state caps", then called the International Socialists. For nine months he lived out of a car, riding in Tony Cliff's front room, rushing around charming everyone and pulling together small groups of socialists.

For some reason, those ex-

hilarating nine months are entirely obliterated from his entry in Who's Who. This darts from his shipyard apprenticeship through his stint as circulation manager of Tribune up and up to the top of every ladder he touched — the Scotsman, Granada Television, Scottish Television etc etc.

I dwell on the early history not just out of nostalgia but in amazement at Gus's explanation of it all. Unlike so many revolution-to-riches heroes, he cannot bring himself to renounce his past. He does not say: "Oh, that was all bollocks, silly immature idealism." He tries instead to make it all part of a logical process. In an interview in last Sunday's Observer with Arnold Kemp, he boasts: "I had a good grounding in Trotsky, and our target was state capitalism" — as though his opposition to state capitalism justified or even explained his rocketing to the heights of private enterprise capitalism. In his Observer interview Gus quotes approvingly from a real socialist hero: the old Red Clydesider, Harry McShane. Kemp writes: "McShane had broken with his old trade union mates and moved towards this 'libertarian left'."

He then quotes Gus as follows: "Harry told me: 'we've got it wrong about Adam Smith'. He urged me to read him. Adam Smith argues that the moral force of the market would empower people. The market looks after the poor better than the central state which can be stolen and corrupted by elites."

The inference is obvious. Even the incorruptible old socialist Harry McShane was seduced by the idea of the free market. This is to my certain knowledge the most insulting nonsense Harry McShane died, as he lived, an utterly convinced (and penniless)

He does not say: 'Oh, that was all bollocks, silly immature idealism'

socialist revolutionary. He did not break "with his old trade union mates". At the age of 98, in the nursing home where he spent his last days, he threatened a hunger strike in protest against pay cuts for the staff.

Harry did read Adam Smith, and was surprised and delighted by Smith's espousal of the labour theory of value, a theory, Harry argued, which was used by Marx to make nonsense of the theory of the free market.

And as for the market — "looking after the poor better than the central state which can be stolen and corrupted by elites", I imagine old Harry might have had something to say about a millionaire becoming a peer, or a man taking control of the central state — and then pretending that his decision is all of a piece with his revolutionary socialist youth.

The US cracks down on Iraq and Libya over biological and chemical warfare, but did not utter a word when the apartheid regime did the same

White poison

Max du Preez

APOINT strikes me now that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is winding down its affairs: why have the US and UK governments never uttered a word about apartheid South Africa's extensive chemical and biological warfare programme? Because we now know that they knew. South Africans were shocked when the full story — if it was that — of Project Coast was told to the TRC.

I have always argued against analogies between apartheid South Africa and Nazi Germany, but this time it was appropriate: the manufacture of tons of Ecstasy and Mandrax to "pacify" angry black mobs; the development of deadly anthrax, cholera and botulinus cultures; and of cyanide, Aldikarb, thallium, paracetamol and other dangerous poisons; the manufacture of

James-Bond-like screwdrivers and umbrellas with concealed poisoned needles; research into weapons that would "only" work on people with dark skins; and on a vaccine that would lower the fertility rate of black women.

Truly evil stuff. Dr Wouter Basson, mastermind of the project (and former State President, FW de Klerk's personal physician) attended a closed conference on biological and chemical warfare in San Antonio in the US in 1983. By all accounts he made no secret of who he was and what he was doing. Did nobody ask him what his apartheid government wanted to do with its biological and chemical weapons, but not for the democratically elected black government?

According to some statements the TRC investigators had access to the British proposed that Basson be assassinated. But the De Klerk government agreed only to a

proposal that he be "co-opted and contained". In fact, the ANC government and the US "ran" Basson for at least two years after the 1994 election. In January 1997, the CIA found out that Basson was planning to leave South Africa with his secret box of tricks. They tipped off the authorities in Pretoria that he was in possession of large quantities of Ecstasy and Mandrax tablets, and Basson was arrested and charged.

His court case on charges of murder, theft, fraud and possession of large quantities of Ecstasy and Mandrax tablets will start later this year.

WERE simple Third World people here on the southern tip of Africa, and maybe a lot of this sophisticated stuff is over our heads. But can anybody blame us if we ask why the US has imposed sanctions and indeed war on Iraq and Libya because they allegedly have biological and chemical warfare pro-

grammes, but did not utter a word when the apartheid regime did the same?

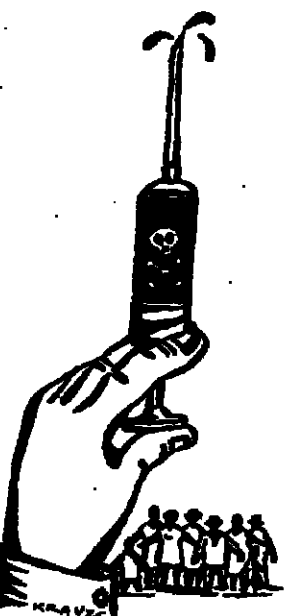
In 1983, Vrye Weekblad, the newspaper which I founded and edited, published a story that General Lothar Neethling, then head of the SA Police's Forensics Department, spent a lot of his time developing poison to be administered to opponents of the National Party government. Most could kill without leaving any trace. We had the evidence of the head of the police death squad, Dirk Coetzee, that Neethling gave him some of these poisons which he then used on ANC sympathisers.

Neethling sued me for defamation for R1.5 million (about £150,000). The Supreme Court judge found him to be a liar and decided in our favour. But in the Appellate Division the judges found both Neethling and Coetzee to be liars, and thus decided that we had not discharged our onus of

proving our defamatory statements. We had to pay Neethling's costs and damages of R90,000 (about £9,000). The case had run for five years. There was no way Vrye Weekblad could pay his legal costs and damages and we closed it down at the end of February 1994.

Exactly 10 years after we published the original story, I sat in the TRC hearing, listening to evidence that Neethling was Basson's biggest ally in Project Coast and that everything we had written about him was indeed true.

My Calvinist grandfather was right when he told me: "Jy kan ho! soos 'n jakkals en blaf soos 'n wildebeest, maar op die einde gaan die waarheid jou vang." (You can run like a fox and bark like a wild dog, but in the end the truth will catch up with you.)



Max du Preez is editor of a weekly South African TV programme on the Truth Commission

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Doctors' golden teeth

Share the perks fairly

IT was a classic Freudian slip. Desperately seeking to defend the indefensible, the president of the Hospital Consultants Association insisted yesterday that distinction awards "aren't some last bolt-on perk". But that is precisely what they are. They were devised 50 years ago by Aneurin Bevan — along with NHS pay beds and part-time contracts that permitted private practice — to "stiff their teeth with gold" and win them round to the launch of the National Health Service. A succession of health ministers, Tory as well as Labour, have in subsequent decades condemned them but the inguinous pay system has continued. Now it is to change. Alan Milburn, the health minister, announced a new system for determining awards, a new procedure to ensure awards are withdrawn in the face of poor performance (following the revelation that an award was still being paid to a senior consultant involved in the Bristol scandal in which 12 children under going heart surgery at the Royal Infirmary died) plus further root and branch change next year.

A top award — worth £55,000 — can double a consultant's salary overnight. The £100 million cost would be sufficient to hire another 2,000 consultants or 3,500 desperately-needed nurses. Only 13 per cent of consultants receive them at any one time but over one third will receive an award before retirement. This pushes up the final bill to over £187 million when pension implications are included.

They were described by the Treasury as "a blot on the landscape". Almost from their launch, it tried to abolish them. Even the health department could only produce contradictory purposes: a compensation for loss of private practice, an inducement to recruitment, a means of attracting consultants away from major teaching hospitals. One decade on they were shown to be disproportionately distributed to teaching hospitals and to consultants already enjoying private practice. The bias continued. Three decades on, the Labour government of 1974-79 tried to shift their distribution away from fashionable specialties (surgery) to unfashionable specialties (geriatrics and psychiatry) and from popular areas (London and Oxford) to unfashionable regions (West Midlands and the North). But the bias continued.

There have been some reforms over the years. The committee which distributes the awards is no longer totally in the hands of the medical profession. The secrecy under which awards were bestowed began to lift with the appointment of the former health ombudsman to the committee's chair two years ago. But even the consultants' association concedes further reform is needed. It is in the profession's own interests. Indeed, the reason the Treasury was won round to supporting the anomalous public service pay procedure was on the grounds that it was a cheap way of offering pay increases. The consultants are right to warn against changes being introduced because of one rogue doctor. But health reformers have been campaigning for change for decades. An Aberdeen consultant, interviewed in our Society section pages in March, who called for awards to go to doctors propping up the NHS on a day-to-day basis rather than to elite high-profile specialists was only echoing earlier calls. He will be pleased. Pa-

tients are to be given a greater say. The current 38-member distributing committee will be reduced to 14 members with eight seats reserved for patient representatives and NHS employees. Ministers are rightly insisting that more women — and more doctors from ethnic minorities — must be recognised. But the old causes must not be forgotten either: a fairer distribution to unfashionable specialties and unpopular areas too.

Burma's misery

It is time for sanctions

HERE ARE TWO questions to ponder about Myanmar (leaving aside another question: why has the military regime changed the country's name from Burma?) First, why was this weekend's anniversary of events on August 8, 1988 in Rangoon commemorated abroad so much less energetically than similar anniversaries for what happened a year later in Tiananmen Square? Burma's young student leaders had chosen the date — 8-8-88 — for its auspicious effect, challenging the military junta which had just declared martial law. (The foreign activists arrested in Rangoon on Sunday were handing out leaflets with the message — "8-8-88: don't give up"). The student protest was met with repeated gunfire not only in the capital but across the country. No one has been able to count the bodies, but far more — thousands — died in Burma than in China the next year.

The second question is why 350,000 men (the officers and soldiers of the Burmese armed forces) are frightened of one woman (the Nobel Peace Prize-winner Aung San Suu Kyi)? Forced by international pressure to lift the formal conditions of her house

arrest, the generals of the SLORC — the appropriately ugly acronym for the regime they set up in September 1988 — continue to harass her in ways which are simultaneously cruel and absurd. This question is easy to answer. Ms Suu Kyi has created a model of passive resistance against which the generals have no effective counter. She is protected to some extent by foreign opinion, but the members of her National League for Democracy have no such protection. Amnesty International reports that there are more than 1,200 long-term political prisoners. Some have spent ten years in prison simply for writing letters or handing out leaflets, and are now physically broken. Entire village populations among the ethnic minorities have been evicted by the army or forced to perform corvée labour.

In the global scene of human rights abuses, Burma/Myanmar comes at the most horrific end of the scale. Some regional analysts in Bangkok believe that the junta is showing signs of internal strain. It is at a dead end and internally divided, while its former head of state General Ne Win may be in terminal decline. The time is long overdue to step up foreign pressure with serious trade sanctions from which Western interests have always recoiled. SLORC has renamed itself the State Peace and Development Association — but it does not make the slightest difference.

Shining cricket

Let's ignore the cynics

THERE IS something about Headingley. In 1981 England beat Australia from an apparently hopeless position, thanks to Botham's belligerence and Brearley's brain;

'Well-oiled summer sex is far superior to peeling off layers of clothing'

Ian Rogers, Letters

In 1981 Graham Gooch played the innings of his life to beat West Indies and end their decade of domination; and yesterday, in the nail-biting final act of an outstanding drama, England defeated South Africa to complete their first win in a full Test series for 12 years. After a summer of sporting disappointment, a nation rejoiced.

Yesterday's win was not quite on a par with the heroics of Botham or Gooch — those were extraordinary performances that turned games which England looked destined to lose. But it was thrilling enough for people in homes and offices to suspend their normal business to follow the play. Gooch, the local hero, made sure they did not watch in vain. Non-cricket-lovers will find the emotion that greeted the victory absurd. It's just a game; a game moreover that is played at a funeral pace and lasts the best part of a week. But ignore the cynics: cricket still has a place in our soul. In 1981 Botham became an instant national hero. In 1991, Gooch's team was lauded in the House of Commons. Alec Stewart has no doubt just booked his knighthood.

After the debacle at Lord's, English cricket was written off by the pundits: nobody watched it, cared about it, played it any more. The football juggernaut was destined to crush it. At the weekend, the soccer season, after the briefest of breaks, began in earnest if England had lost, the obituaries would have been hard at work. As it was, it was far too hot for football and the sun shone brightest on English cricket. Now England head for Australia where, if the bookies are to be believed, their hopes will once more turn to ashes. If they do, the headline-writers will round on yesterday's heroes and pronounce the game dead for the umpteenth time. The Ashes date back to England's shock defeat by the "Colonists" in 1882: it has been a long time dying.

Letters to the Editor

Why Julie's name isn't mud

IT SEEMS that Julie Burchill (Guardian Weekend, August 9) has identified a hitherto unknown sexual perversion. Obviously, in order to be studied properly, it must first be given a name. Unfortunately, "burchillism" is inappropriate, since by tradition perversions are denoted by the name of the person who first became famous for practising them, as opposed to whoever first described them in the literature. (In any case, "burchillism" should perhaps be reserved for practices more specifically associated with Ms Burchill herself.)

For the new practice of "doing it with mud", I suggest "aldisism", after Brian Aldis, the science fiction writer, who also wrote a courageously frank autobiography. The titles of the first two volumes, *The Hand-Reared Boy* and *A Soldier Erect*, provide a fair insight into their content. He qualifies for donating his name to science because of an incident in a lake in Malaysia, described in the second of these.

Peter Mellor, Stevenage, Herts.

HOWEVER militant the 17th-century church, I doubt your account of "zealots" — positioned on the wall by the Protestant defenders of London (Tale of strife, betrayal and romance, August 8). As Presbyterians, they are much more likely to have planted elders.

Philip Jones, Morden, Surrey.

FORGET the slate carvings found at Tintagel (Do these markings mean that the legend of King Arthur is now a fact? August 7, and Letters, August 10). Every Yorkshireman knows that the real King Arthur is alive and well, and president of the National Union of Mineworkers.

Rob Hays, Ripponden, West Yorks.

As a thinking woman may I assure you that Desmond Lynam is not the thinking woman's crumpet (Des Lynam smooth-talks his way into Radio 2 drive-time, August 7). In fact, I never think about him at all. If anyone were to assume that mantle it would be Alan Rickman.

D Dodd, London.

DURING July this household received 56 articles of unsolicited promotional mail weighing 3.3 kilograms. If this is typical of the amount received by each household in the country, how many acres of forest are required to service Britain's monthly junk mail output?

R Oldroyd, Bath.

YOUR report (Serbs claim that Kosovo push is nearly over, August 8) that Nato plans to bomb targets across the whole of Serbia "to help restore peace" puts me in mind of the old American adage: "fighting for peace is like screwing for virginity".

Brian Pocock, London.

Hot sex down south

I READ with incredulity (Letters, August 8) complaints about lack of time to enjoy the summer weather. What nonsense! The writer had at least seen the sun these last few days.

The only ones who have a right to complain are we in the north-west. Recently we were shopping in the early morning in nearby Darlington, dressed in light summer clothes at last. After half an hour in a shop we found that it was raining heavily outside. In the afternoon the fierce west wind, which has been plaguing us for weeks, rose again and battered all our plants.

The next day we made the same trip, with the same hope of a clear summer day, only to find that half the sky over Darlington had taken on a familiar dark grey hue. A street sign told us that all areas north of Leeds were in a thick

belt of heavy cloud which would last all day. All too true. We have not seen the sun at all. But at least it has been warmer, a modest 20°C.

Our morning temperatures throughout June and July were around 10-11°C (as in April and May).

We do not sympathise with anyone praising a cold, dull summer, monotonously the same from June to August. Green with envy, of course, when we see the weather forecast predicting warmth, especially long hours of sunshine in the south and south-east. Here is a real difference between the haves and have-nots!

E Marianne Whittaker, Richmond, North Yorks.

I AM NOT surprised that your correspondent dislikes hot weather and those who praise it. The fact that hot weather causes sickness, irritation, sweating, and headaches in this correspondent is most likely a result of the extra weight he, or she, admits to carrying around.

I also have to disagree with the assertion that cold weather is sexy, and that "sweaty bodies rolling together" are not. I think that well-oiled summer sex is far superior to peeling off layers of clothing while the invading cold freezes your ardour.

Ian Rogers, Sheffield.



Playing the housing game

WILL Hatchett (Housing Trusts take stock, August 5) surprisingly refers to council house provision as a "game". He suggests it could be about to end through (believe it or not) New Labour's mass disposal of these valuable public assets, land and buildings, to the private sector — no doubt at the usual bargain basement prices.

The Tory party fostered this method of plundering the public purse for private gain, inclusive of bribing council tenants to vote for it by offering sweeteners such as temporary rent freezes. Ironically, the tenants are not the sole owners of this municipal property. It was originally financed by rate and taxpayers, who are denied participation in the voting procedure. This is more like a game, rent-free monopoly, which they will come to regret.

Ignored is the fact that fragmented property holdings cause increased maintenance costs. As a former Labour councillor, with experience of housing matters, and a retired local authority Chief Officer, I am amazed to read that a city

Housing Chairperson seemingly fails to appreciate the underlying objections to this policy. It is an admission of failure by government, national and local, to pretend that tenant-friendliness would somehow be enhanced outside democratic public control. The massive state subsidies and government backing given to these private housing associations is a financial scandal.

One thing is certain — apart from loss of public control and accountability, in a critical social area affecting the poor and homeless, these private quangos associations can never do better than properly organised public service housing in terms of low cost rentals and general support facilities for tenants.

History shows it to be so, despite the previous government's measures designed to force up council rents and undermine local government attempts to maintain or improve standards. Undoubtedly, the "bed of roses" will soon become a bed of thorns.

N Walsh, Fleetwood, Lancashire.

Beware old Labour's bunch of elite, bourgeois lefties

AS AN addict of the Guardian's iconoclasm towards the new Labour machine, I have to say that you have gone too far (Leader, August 10). Endorsing the Grassroots Alliance slate for Labour's National Executive Committee is folly.

The organisations represented on the slate are the very ones that brought Labour to its knees in the early 80s. The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (an ironic euphemism) and Labour Briefing are London-based, bourgeois, middle class elites who don't give two hoots about the party.

You imply that the Grassroots Alliance candidates are the only ones who wish to keep debate alive in the party. Have you talked to any of the other candidates? Have you asked Sylvia Tudge about devolution or Diana Jouda about welfare reform or Terry Thomas about pensioners' rights? If you had you would know that they know their

own minds and are not afraid to speak out. What's more, they have rolled up their sleeves to get Labour elected in the bad times as well as the good.

Tom Watson, Kidderminster, Worcestershire.

I AM 20 years old and have been a Labour activist for more than eight years. I have seen how those who claim to be from the left of the party created an unelectable Labour Party during the Thatcher years. The Grassroots Alliance are an extreme, unrepresentative, cranky faction of Militant-style extremists. In Liverpool we have seen what these people and their pals have done to our party, resulting in the Liberal Democrats gaining overall control.

I urge all members of the Labour Party to vote for those who put the Labour Party and the Labour government first.

Leon Rodin, Liverpool.

The uncle, fathers and mothers of the Pill

I READ with disbelief your reporter's reference to Carl Djerassi (Pill popper, G2, August 5) as the "creator of the contraceptive pill". This is by no means the scientific or historical consensus. It is true that Carl Djerassi synthesised norethisterone (the first progestogen), which went on to be an important ingredient in many oral contraceptives and was approved in the mid-1950s for treatment of menstrual disturbances.

However, the first combined oral contraceptive (the "pill" as it is known today) was created using a different progestogen in combination with an oestrogen, which was put on trial in Puerto Rico in 1956 by Gregory Pincus, John

Rock, Celso-Ramon Garcia and Edris Rice-Wray. It was approved as an oral contraceptive in May 1960 and marketed as Enovid. It was the work of a team, not an individual (not to mention the thousands of women who took part in the trials), but unfortunately neither Pincus nor Rock are alive and in a position to dispute Djerassi's claims.

Djerassi also states that the pill was a man's invention as there were "no women in my field at the time". Apart from the fact that Edris Rice-Wray was a woman, almost all of the research by Pincus and Rock was personally financed by Katherine McCormick, a wealthy birth-control activist.

At the time, the US government did not provide funds for research into birth control. In addition, the activist Margaret Sanger is known to have financed Gregory Pincus to work on an oral contraceptive.

Your journalist seemed to find Djerassi's fallibility endearing — perhaps that should have encouraged her to look more closely at his claims. He would perhaps be more appropriately referred to as the uncle, rather than the father, of the modern oral contraceptive pill.

Dr Emily Banks, Clinical Research Fellow, Imperial Cancer Research Fund, Oxford.

The video umpire strikes back

WE CAN use video to alleviate the worst miscarriages of umpiring justice (Australia appeal for live by video, August 5), while still allowing the umpires to retain their proper role as arbiters. Allow each batsman up to two appeals per innings to the third umpire as of right. Video evidence can then be used, for example, to reverse the umpire's decision if he gives the batsman out caught but it turns out that the ball in fact brushed the pad and not the bat.

side 27 similar appeals per innings (2 per batsman) for cases where they feel they have been hard done by. If the video evidence is inconclusive then the umpire's decision stands. Because of the limitation on appeals they will only be used when there is a real doubt.

Simon Hunter, Brookmans Park, Hertfordshire.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied; please include a full postal address. We may edit letters.

Loyal test

THE resolution of the Lambeth Conference on human sexuality (Only and unrel, August 5) leaves the Church of England with a potential constitutional crisis. In the desperation to disavow the homophobia of many Anglican bishops by ruling out all sexual behaviour outside life-long marriage, it has been made impossible to take the loyal oath in good conscience should the Prince of Wales ever become sovereign while our Church remains established.

Rev Stephen Coles, London.

Vision needed for rights act

IT IS difficult to know how the Human Rights Act can become established without a human rights commission or commissioner (Lord Irvine of Lairg, Letters, August 6). Without such back-up, who will be able to assess the success, failure and gaps?

Although the appointment of a parliamentary committee devoted to human rights would be welcome, MPs could not possibly devote the time necessary to address the massive information demand which the Act will provoke from the general public, legal

practitioners and public bodies. Without a statutory body acting as a reference point which educates and informs on the new raft of rights which incorporation of the European Human Rights Convention will bring, the Human Rights Act will be a lame duck.

The Government's lack of vision on this matter brings into question its commitment to successful implementation of important legislation.

Frances D'Sonza, Executive Director, Article 19.

How to weed out the genetic crops that really are worth worrying about

WEEDKILLER-resistant crops (Gene crops 'super weed' nightmare, confirmed, August 7) are environmentally dangerous, even when they only work as intended. They allow farmers to spray toxic poisons liberally, exterminating all the vegetation in an area other than the crop plants, and the animals which live on the vegetation.

On the other hand, the Flavr Savr tomato (which ripens hard and can only be sold as tomato puree because the gene

for softening is inhibited by a counter gene) is not dangerous. If we are concerned for the environment, we will choose which genetic modifications to oppose, and which not to worry about. As a whole, the vociferous movement against genetic modification is only secondarily concerned for the environment. Its primary motive is a superstitious fear of "tampering with nature".

Donald Room, London.

THE nightmare of a "super weed" arising from the gene flow from a genetically modified crop to associated weeds leads logically from the continuing challenge to increase agricultural productivity.

The prevailing chemical (and now biotechnology) versus non-chemical approach to weed control diverts attention away from investigating imaginative weed control measures.

Swiss scientists have devel-

oped a non-toxic polymer — by reconsidering the fundamental physiology for weed growth — which, when applied to a soil surface, selectively suppresses weed growth.

The polymer is under field evaluation in Oman. The prospect of marketing such an environmentally safe polymer is well nigh zero, competing as it does with the vested interests of the multinational companies and the entrenched organic farming lobby.

Alternatives to killing soils with herbicides do exist and their development costs are tiny in comparison with the risks of rampant biotechnology.

Peter Cookson, Oman.

WE MUST ban genetically modified food immediately. Please campaign for the banning of those orange pipkins now.

Jim Daley, Brynford, Flintshire.

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Analysis Biodiversity



**Apartheid's
Dr Poison**

Tearing up the map of creation

A fish the size of a barn door is on the verge of extinction. But if we failed to notice this until almost too late, how many other species are disappearing? What we do know, says **Tim Radford** is that the massacre of the species at present rates has baleful consequences for Planet Earth

A BIG fish is about to swim away, forever. The barndoor skate *Raja kete* seems close to extinction. In 1951 research ships found it in 10 per cent of all trawls of the St Pierre Bank in the Atlantic Ocean off Newfoundland. Over the last 20 years, none at all have been caught there. The barndoor skate grows to a metre across, not something you would miss if you were looking out for it. But nobody was. "Failure to examine historical data has resulted in the loss of the largest skate in the North Atlantic being driven to near extinction without anyone noticing," say researchers. If something the size of a barn door could slip away without being missed "the fate of little known species is likely to be worse".

The things that make life possible are barely visible. Laboratory experiments based on small, artificial worlds keep demonstrating that diversity is life's strongest card. The recycling of air and water and plant nutrients is the business of little creatures most of us never notice. The food we eat, the medicines we take and the tools we use have been fashioned for us by 500 million years of evolution. Yet we know practically nothing about most of them. We even lack a starting point. Who knows how many small fry are being ditched? Creatures are being erased from life's register faster than anyone can record them. All the evidence is that humans are extinguishing other life forms on an epic scale. But there are no tallymen to count the dead, or take the measure of the living: there are probably only about 7,000 experts — they are called taxonomists, or sometimes systematists — on the whole planet with the authority to distinguish species one from another. Most are in the wrong places. And few have been getting much encouragement. Without them, we cannot even begin to argue.

The Book of Genesis established 3,000 years ago — to the satisfaction of Jewish and Christian Europe at least — that Man had dominion over beast and fowl but it was not until 1788 that Carl Linnaeus, the great Swedish taxonomist, began counting the kingdom. French and British natural historians followed and established a systematic way of interrogating a creature's nature in order to make a family connection.

They started with kingdoms (is it animal or vegetable?); phyla (has it got a backbone or a skeleton on the outside and jointy legs?); class (is it a mammal or a marsupial?); family (can it walk upright?); genus (is it a human of some kind or a cat maybe?) and species (call that person sapiens?). In the course of 240 years, they established a local habitation and name for each of about 1.7 or 1.8 million species.

But there is no central catalogue or inventory. So the same species might be recorded under one identity in one country and under an entirely separate name in another. Where scientists have checked, they have found "synonymy" in perhaps 20 per cent of cases. So the true number of species that have been described and named is perhaps 1.4 million.

Then researchers began to look a little harder. They spread nets under trees, dusted them with insecticide and counted just the arthropods (including

insects) that fell out. The numbers astonished them. When they got to 50,000, they started to get alarmed; by that reckoning there might be 20 million species to be described, rather than two million. What was true for the Amazon rainforest turned out to be equally true for coral reefs and mangrove swamps. The great plains of Africa turned out to be bewilderingly rich in life. "Everybody's idea of the Serengeti is a big acacia tree with a leopard hanging in it," says one ecologist. But there are at least 28 species of acacia in the Serengeti. God knows how many beetles there might be — and God, as the great biologist J. B. S. Haldane once deduced, has "an inordinate fondness for beetles" having made so many of them.

But taxonomists are oppressed by something darker than the task of counting. What is going on now is described quite calmly as "the sixth great extinction." The fossil record is a pattern of evolution and extinction, with species continuously evolving, flourishing and expiring as naturally as individuals are born, develop and die. Imposed on this hubbub of appearance and disappearance is a series of dramatic happenings: mass disappearances, followed by new beginnings, at least five times in the past 500 million years.

The last of these was 65 million years ago, when a 10-kilometre asteroid whacked into the Yucatan in Mexico. The change now is less dramatic but no less significant. According to some theorists, half of all the creatures with which humans share the planet could be about to slip away into the eternal night, simply because their homes are being destroyed. By man. The world's dwindling tropical forests could be losing creatures at the rate of 27,000 a year — three creatures an hour — at the most conservative estimate. The precision of these figures is disputed, the truth behind them is not. In the last century, birds and mammals have been disappearing at an average rate of one a year. This is already a thousand times faster than the "background" rate of extinction. It is confirmed by crude counts made by the conservation groups: a tenth of all flowering plants are about to disappear, a tenth of all birds on the planet are seriously endangered, many of the big mammal groups — the cats, in particular — could be about to disappear. But 99 per cent of creation is less than 3mm long. Most of smaller species will be gone before scientists ever find out they were here.

SO taxonomy's high command — people at the Smithsonian and the Missouri Botanic Gardens in the US, and the Natural History Museum in London and at Kew — decided to stake out small areas of forest or savannah and simply sample the local life, quick headcounts of this and that species. Such a British project in the Cameroon came to an abrupt end only last year. Scientists had marked out a few hectares of already well-studied forest and begun to catalogue all the creatures in just a limited selection of groups. They gave up. Even within the limits the scientists set, there were simply too many species to count. "They absolutely overwhelmed the resources," says John Lawton, of Imperial College London and president of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. "We could

have carried on, but we would have needed many more taxonomists and systematists."

There's the rub. "The global workforce, considered to number 7,000 systematists, is clearly inadequate given the scale of these tasks," says Stephen Blackmore, keeper of botany at the Natural History Museum. Work done by taxonomists based in London or Washington essentially involves travel to faraway places on budgets that simply don't stretch very far. Good taxonomists don't grow on trees. John Lawton says "Really good taxonomists will be able to identify on sight more than 10,000 species of their chosen group, without having to look anything up."

There is a case for biodiversity: everybody recognises it. A landscape without skylarks or corn cockles is poorer. But creatures disappear because their surroundings change, and those surroundings were maintained for them by other sets of creatures. So biodiversity cannot be managed unless it can be understood, and it cannot be understood unless its components are identified.

BIODIVERSITY is a matter of naked human self-interest. Human economy rests on plants. Crops and their wild relatives have to be understood and conserved and that means the insects that prey on them must also be understood. Plants that provide most medicines — from aspirin for headaches to taxol for breast cancer — have developed the chemicals they possess as a response to their co-evolution with insects. There could be billions of dollars of useful, valuable, exploitable knowledge to be gained from almost unknown creatures in their habitats. Why do barnacles not grow on starfish? Because they secrete a natural anti-fouling paint. Why do arctic fish not freeze? Because they have an antifreeze fluid to keep blood circulating. Last year Cornell scientists calculated that if humans had to pay for the services they received free from nature — pollination, water purification, crop pest control, that sort of thing — the bill would be \$2.9 million million annually. Fellow creatures are a kind of map of creation. "Just knowing how many species there are is like having proper maps of the stars," says John Lawton. "It's exactly the same for a proper science of ecology and evolution and many areas of biology. We need to know how many organisms there are, what they are and where they are."

Sources: (1) Near-extinction of a large, widely-distributed fish, Jill M. Casey and Rason A. Myers, *Science*, July 31, 1998; (2) Sir Robert May, government chief scientific adviser, *Stamford Raffles Lecture*, Zoological Society, June 30, 1998; (3) Counting the creatures of the Serengeti, *Science*, December 19, 1997; (4) *Nature*, January 1, 1998; (5) *Knowing the Earth's Biodiversity*, *Science* October 4 1996. **Graphics:** Sources: *Science*, March, 1998; *Ethnobotanical approach to drug discovery* by Paul Alan Cox and Michael J. Balick, *Scientific American*, June 1994. *Biodiversity Rising*, Edward O. Wilson, W.W. Norton. **Cartoon:** Glyn Wainwright. **Research:** Matthew Keating. Tim Radford is the Guardian's science editor.

Life's rich tapestry



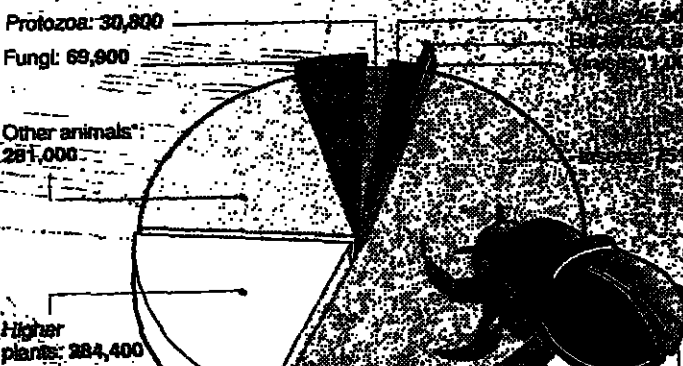
Natural remedies

Like many drugs, aspirin was developed after scientists began to analyse chemical constituents of plants used in traditional, herbal healing. Called the ethnobotanical approach, it may uncover future drug treatments.

Drug	Medical use	Plant Source
Aspirin	Reduce pain and inflammation	<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>
Codine	Ease pain; suppress coughing	<i>Papaver somniferum</i>
Lidocaine	Relieve itching	<i>Psychotria leucocarpa</i>
Procaine	Relieve eye pressure	<i>Pilocarpus jaborandi</i>
Procaine	Relieve nasal congestion	<i>Sphegodesmia</i>
Quinine	Combat malaria	<i>Cinchona pubescens</i>
Reserpine	Lower blood pressure	<i>Rauvolfia</i>
Scopolamine	Ease motion sickness	<i>Hyoscyamus</i>
Theophylline	Relieve asthma	<i>Camellia sinensis</i>
Valerian	Relieve nervousness	<i>Valeriana</i>

Animal detectives

A taxonomist classifies organisms. This traditional method of counting species suggests that insects dominate the world's biodiversity. However, new techniques using gene typing techniques — reveal that single-cell organisms are more diverse than insects and plants.



*Includes non-vascular plants, mosses, ferns, gymnosperms, angiosperms, and other higher plants.



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FinanceGuardian

Mandelson heads for EU showdown over BA deal

Chris Barrie

NEW trade and industry secretary Peter Mandelson was last night faced with the prospect of defusing a row between the European Commission and Britain's competition authority over the terms to be imposed on BA as the price of approving its alliance with American Airlines.

In a move certain to intensify the rift between Brussels and Westminster over airline regulation, EU competition commissioner Karel van Miert said yesterday that BA should not be allowed to sell take-off and landing slots at

Heathrow and Gatwick, a flat contradiction to a suggestion made last week by the Office of Fair Trading in advice to Mr Mandelson.

Mr Van Miert insisted that such a sale would contravene a regulation laid down by Europe's council of ministers. This ruling had been confirmed when the full Commission subsequently proposed clearing the BA-AA alliance on condition that the carriers give up 267 weekly slots to ease competition concerns.

Mr Van Miert said sale of the slots could also contravene EU competition rules.

The pronouncement leaves Mr Mandelson facing conflicting advice over what is likely to be by far the most significant regulatory decision of his early days at the trade and industry department.

The decision over the slots, worth millions of pounds to BA, resides with him, although the alliance also needs approval from the US department of transportation.

Robert Ayling, BA chief executive, said last night that the most efficient way of real-allocating scarce resources — such as slots — was to have a market in them by making them tradeable.

Mr Ayling went on to back Mr Mandelson against suggestions that the trade and industry secretary could suffer a conflict of interest by both deciding on the future of BA's alliance and leading the Millennium Dome project to which BA is a substantial contributor.

Mr Ayling said that BA had committed itself to supporting the Dome under the previous government, and noted that Mr Mandelson had taken advice on the matter.

His remarks followed last week's admission that the trade and industry secretary had taken advice from the DTI's senior civil servant on whether it was appropriate for him to be involved in the BA ruling.

The developments came as BA shares fell 34p, or more than 5 per cent, to close at 597p as the City focused on concerns over the airline's passengers yields despite a sharp rise in first-quarter profits.

Excluding the effects of last year's acrimonious strike by cabin staff and a one-off gain on disposals, pre-tax profits rose by 59 per cent to £145 million on turnover 3 per cent higher at £2.3 billion.

Much of the gain was due to the airline's drive to cut costs, a programme worth £500 million now and due to rise to £700 million by 2001. Mr Ayling said the cost-cutting was unrivalled by other European airlines, which were still relying on currency values to protect their positions.

Although it had been "unpleasant", Mr Ayling said he was pleased that BA had tackled the need to revamp its

wage structures first as part of an efficiency programme.

Now the airline is concentrating on boosting asset values and was negotiating with Boeing and Airbus Industrie over orders for aircraft.

He said competition was driving prices lower as the industry deregulated. But more efficient companies would benefit in the long term.

The airline said its results had been affected by the economic conditions in the UK, where consumer spending is slowing, and the Far East. Mr Ayling said BA was holding its margins in the Far East by changing the mix of services although it was "anyone's guess" whether the region's difficulties had bottomed out.

Cloud on tour operators' horizon

Minister acts to outlaw holiday cover scam

Liz Stuart

THE Government has banned travel agencies and tour operators from insisting that tourists buy travel insurance as part of a package deal or giving discounts to customers who do.

Kim Howells, Minister for Competition and Consumer Affairs, said yesterday that it will also be illegal for a tour operator to withhold supplies of holidays from a travel agent not offering the same extras to customers on all packages.

"Consumers should not be forced to take out insurance which may not be competitively priced... nor should they have to pay more for holidays because travel agents are discouraged by tour operators from offering discounts they would otherwise be prepared to offer," he said.

Policies sold through travel agents can be up to 60 per cent more expensive than those sold by direct insurers. For instance, cover for a two-week break in Europe costs £79.90 per couple from Going Places and Lunn Poly, while a comparable policy costs £36 from Worldwide Travel Insurance Services.

The move follows a consultation process started in December by the then Trade Secretary, Margaret Beckett, after the Monop-



Paradise or purgatory? ... The beach at Nice yesterday. Mandatory insurance doesn't compensate for inability to find a parasol. PHOTOGRAPH BY LIONEL GRONAU

lies and Merger Commission had reported on malpractice in the selling of travel cover.

The MMC says commission on insurance earned the leading four travel agents nearly £130 million — more than six times their operating profits from supplying holidays — in 1996.

The report also identified the use of "most favoured customer" status, which means some people were offered greater discounts on their holidays, pushing up prices for other consumers.

Under the new order, which comes into force in November, this will be banned.

John Bridgeman, the director-general of fair trading, is still in talks with the major travel groups about the other issue raised by the MMC — that consumers are unaware of the ownership links between travel agencies and the tour operators whose holidays they sell.

He is talking to Airtrons, which owns Going Places; Thomson Travel, owner of Lunn Poly; and Thomson Tour Operators, and Carlson Leisure Group, whose empire covers AT Mayes and Worldchoice.

Last week the tax on travel insurance sold through brokers or banks

was increased to 17.5 per cent from 4 per cent to bring it into line with tour operators, typically adding an extra £20 to the cost of annual cover.

Figures from the Insurance Ombudsman, show that 500,000 people claimed last year.

Prudential promises sales investigation

Tony Levene

THE Prudential pledged last night to launch an investigation into Guardian revelations that it has continued to attempt to mis-sell pensions.

Britain's biggest pension company, which faces an estimated £1.1 billion clean-up bill to compensate past pension mis-selling victims, says it wants to find out what happened in the sales process that led to Guardian investigators being recommended personal pensions that were not best suited to their needs.

In particular, Prudential agents attempted to sell policies that would maximise earnings for both the salesperson and the company and recommended personal pensions that would produce lower value for the purchaser.

In one case, the regular monthly premium policy put forward would have ensured that nearly half of the first year's contributions would

have left the potential purchaser's pension pot to be used by the Prudential in remunerating its salesforce and in other charges rather than being invested for the buyer's benefit. Fees on an alternative Prudential policy would have been around 5 per cent — approximately a tenth as much.

Martin Brownstein, the Prudential head of compliance, said: "We want to see the details so we can see what has happened. Then we shall be in a position to launch an investigation into your allegations which we take very seriously."

Brownstein's role is to ensure that the company's selling process is in accordance with the rules of the watchdog, the Financial Services Authority, and, more widely, with the Financial Services Act.

The Prudential said that its "internal checking system" would have identified any potential pensions mis-selling and prevented them from being processed.

Brownstein said: "We don't believe these sales would have run their full course once our checking procedures had seen the details."

Insurers suggest that the bias shown towards the costlier product stems from the Prudential's remuneration scheme which rewards sales of regular premium plans at a higher level than the same value contribution as a lump sum.

The Guardian's investigators posed as self-employed people with erratic earnings but who had saved up a £3,000 lump sum which they wanted to invest for their retirement years.

Independent pensions experts said the best course for such people is a lump sum pension when their earnings are high enough to afford it.

Adrian Webb at Direct Line said: "The pensions market is crying out for transparency in charges rather than the lure of commission which can still drive salespeople to put the needs of consumers a poor second."

Mayflower takes on Volvo with hostile bid for Dennis

Tony May

MAYFLOWER Corporation battled Volvo and Henlys yesterday when it made a hostile £255 million bid for Dennis, the bus and fire-engine maker.

The company — which last year surprised the City by considering a £1 billion bid for Vickers — acted after failing to get the backing of the Dennis board in talks last week.

Mayflower's bid eclipses the £210 million offer from bus manufacturer Henlys, backed by Volvo. The Swedish group said yesterday that it intended to buy about 10 per cent of Henlys's shares on the stock market "to reinforce the industrial and commercial co-operation" between the two companies.

Analysts said Volvo was unable to bid directly for Dennis as it already has a 40 per cent share of the UK bus and chassis market and regulating authorities would proba-

bly object to it adding the 42.5 per cent share held by Dennis. John Simpson, Mayflower's chief executive, hinted that his group would call in the Monopolies and Mergers Commission if Volvo intervened in support of Henlys, but said he hoped a "three-way scrap" would not develop. His aim was to create one of the largest bus makers in Britain with a market capitalisation of £750 million. He said Dennis's operations would "fit like a glove".

"This creates great opportunities for Mayflower to put its renowned body engineering skills together with Dennis's specialist vehicle business and combine our bus-body building operations with their bus-chassis operations to give customers integrated products," he said.

Both groups had a strong presence in Hong Kong and Singapore and Dennis would get a boost from Mayflower's expansion plans in South East Asia and North America. "We couldn't sit back and

let one of our competitors buy Dennis," said Mr Simpson. He added that, if the offer was successful, Dennis would retain its present management and name and there were no plans for cuts in Dennis's 1,800 workforce.

Both Mayflower and Henlys used Dennis to take advantage of the strongly-growing US bus market. There, newly privatised bus operators are ordering new fleets to replace those formerly owned by states.

The Dennis board urged its shareholders to take no action on either of the bids. It said it had noted the offer by Mayflower and was seeking clarification from Henlys.

Analysts expected Henlys to raise its bid terms but Mr Simpson said Mayflower had the necessary financial muscle if it was necessary to raise its own bid. The Mayflower offer represents a premium of 35.3 per cent to Dennis's share price before the Henlys' offer and a premium of 14.2 per cent on the level before Mayflower expressed an interest.

Notebook

Why rates should come down now



Larry Elliott

IT WAS DH Lawrence who once said: "Never trust the artist. Trust the tale." And rarely is the dictum more appropriate than when applied to equity markets.

All sorts of reasons can be wheeled out by those analysts seeking to explain why there is nothing in the fundamentals to suggest that we are on the brink of a savage bear market. But the people who actually matter — the fund managers — see things rather differently.

According to Merrill Lynch, the people actually responsible for placing the billions of pounds invested in the financial markets are moving out of equities and property and into gilts and cash. Why? Because they fear that the slowdown in the economy, already taking a toll of corporate profitability, is going to get a lot worse over the coming months.

All the talk of the economy overheating, prevalent in the early summer, has disappeared and been replaced by fears that the economy will hit a brick wall this winter.

No doubt the survey will be shrugged off by stock market bulls as a knee-jerk response by fund managers who like to troop off in gangs, but this would be a serious mistake. Sentiment has not been as gloomy as this since 1980, when Britain was suffering the first of its two recessions under the Conservatives, and there is no shortage of hard evidence to support the downbeat view.

Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, for example, publish a list of eight leading indicators of the economy — including business and consumer confidence, investment plans, profitability, the exchange rate and the monetary/fiscal stance — to predict whether the recession is likely to pick up or slow down. In the UK's case every one of the eight is pointing to a slowdown.

Dresdner Kleinwort Benson's own analysis is that monetary and fiscal policy is tighter now than it was during the recession of the early 1990s, which, given the sharp reduction in inflation, is like using a sledgehammer to crack a nut. The Bank of England will have the chance to explain what it is up to tomorrow when it releases its quarterly inflation report.

Don't expect to read any of this from the Old Lady tomorrow, but here are three predictions. First, the economy will weaken more than anybody is expecting over the next few months, dragging the stock market down. Second, interest rates will start to fall within the next couple of months as the weakness becomes apparent even to the Monetary Policy

Committee. And third, in six months' time the one dissonant note on the MPC — DeAnne Julius — will be vindicated in her call for rates to start coming down now.

Chill easterly

MORE than a year after the start of the Asian financial crisis, the full impact is still being underestimated in the West. Yet the cut-price exports from the Far East are starting to have a considerable dampening effect on corporate profitability, particularly in sectors such as textiles, computer chips and steel.

The last thing European and American companies need now is a devaluation of the Chinese yuan, a move which would trigger a second wave of currency collapses across the region. Yet speculation is mounting that that is precisely what may happen over the coming weeks if the Japanese yen continues to fall against the US dollar.

Amid rumours that black market trading in the yuan is rife in Shanghai, the authorities in China stepped into the foreign exchanges to prop up the yuan yesterday. Some analysts believe that a fall in the yen below 150 to the dollar — and it was trading at 146.5 yesterday — would be the final straw for the Chinese.

This is probably wide of the mark. The yen's weakness is certainly causing problems in China's vital export sector, but Beijing wants to use the plaudits it has received from the West for its hard-line anti-devaluation stance to gain full membership of the World Trade Organisation. Of course, there will be a point when the pressure on Beijing becomes intolerable and devaluation will ensue. But, for the time being, it is likely to hold firm.

Playing the slots

GIVEN that BA chief executive Robert Ayling is a key player in the Millennium Dome project, the safe option for the Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Mandelson would be to side with Brussels in the row with the airline over slots at Heathrow. Safe but wrong.

EU commissioner Karel van Miert is arguing that the sale of the BA link-up with American Airlines is that the UK carrier should give up the slots without recompense. Given that the slots are valuable assets, BA says that it should be able to sell them at the going rate.

The OPT is backing the company's position, but the final decision lies with Mr Mandelson. One side of BA's balance sheet is affected by a market where competition is ferocious and margins are under constant pressure. It makes little sense to clobber the other side by forcing the company to hand a competitive advantage to its rivals, particularly at a time when the domestic economy is softening.

Amersham firm buys out gene research partner

Roger Cowe

AMERSHAM Pharmacia Biotech yesterday paid £200 million for Molecular Dynamics, its Californian partner in genetic research.

The buyout, a joint venture between Nycomed Amersham and Pharmacia & Upjohn, has owned a million Molecular Dynamics shares since the creation of a strategic alliance between the companies in 1994.

Ron Long, chief executive of Amersham Pharmacia Biotech, said that acquiring the rest of the shares would help create a stronger business by creating a better, balanced portfolio of gene research technologies.

"This will strengthen our position at the heart of the genomics industry," he said. "Through Molecular Dynamics, we will be focusing our efforts on collaborating with

the international genomics community to enable the acceleration of their research programmes."

Molecular Dynamics had sales last year of \$56 million (\$36.3 million) and pre-tax profits of \$3.5 million. The company had net assets of \$42 million at the end of last year.

The US company provides systems to accelerate genetic discovery and analysis, including micro-assays, DNA sequencing instruments and scanners.

In a separate deal, Chiroscience, the biotech company, raised \$30 million through the sale of a 30 per cent stake in Chirotech Technology, its product and service unit. The buyer is Ascot, a specialist in chemical engineering.

The chemicals company has produced products for Chirotech, including lactam, an ingredient in Abacivir, Glaxo Wellcome's anti-viral drug.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.644	Germany 2.812	Malaysia 6.53	Singapore 2.78
Austria 19.72	Greece 465.30	Malta 0.522	South Africa 19.00
Belgium 58.00	Hong Kong 12.24	Netherlands 3.181	Spain 237.43
Canada 2.454	India 69.54	New Zealand 3.112	Sweden 12.74
Cyprus 0.125	Ireland 1.1	Norway 12.15	Switzerland 1.935
Denmark 10.78	Israel 6.07	Portugal 294.89	Turkey 435.890
Finland 8.834	Italy 2.788	Saudi Arabia 6.00	USA 1.581
France 5.937	Japan 1.357		

Supplied by Reuters (including rates, shares and miscellany)

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Rugby Union

Brinkmanship is taken to the limit for British League

Robert Kitson

AS THE inevitable sceptics gathered on the touchline, those responsible for turning proposals for a British League into something concrete were still oiling the wheels of European rugby's diplomatic machinery yesterday. The next 48 hours should determine whether a grand idea is destined to gather dust for 12 months.

Although Brian Baister, the Rugby Football Union's new management board chairman, did sit down with his Welsh counterpart Glanville Griffiths at a meeting of the Home Unions' treasurers in London, the WRU coyly insisted that discussions about a British League were not part of the original agenda, saying only that officials "may well see fit to broach the subject, time permitting".

The man whose name always crops up on these occasions, the international board chairman Vernon Pugh, is in Buenos Aires and there was even the sound of silence from the normally vociferous English clubs. With ERC Ltd also waiting until the last moment to nail down the list of participants in this season's European Cup, brinkmanship is being taken to its limits.

Although no one disputes that a British League — a 20-team event has been mooted involving the 14 English Premiership clubs, the top four Welsh clubs and two Scottish "super-districts" — would solve a lot of domestic disputes, the key figures are being asked to take a leap of faith with neighbours with whom, less than a week ago, they were not on speaking terms.

Caution is being shown in Wales. "The subject is certainly one that should be discussed at the appropriate time and with the appropriate people" was the sober message from Griffiths yesterday.

Time is the enemy, but there does seem to be a refreshing willingness to make progress. A conference call involving the ubiquitous Pugh is pencilled in for today, with the English clubs still under pressure to abandon their EC application challenging the IFB's refusal to broadcast revenue. Unless a compromise can be found there will be no English representation in Europe this season. ERC, meanwhile, has given the Welsh contingent until tomorrow to confirm their entry. Like a bunch of line-out jumpers hoisted too early, there is a lot of inelegant hovering going on.

Two players yesterday quit Bristol, the crisis-ridden Premiership Two club. The Irish international centre Kevin Maggs has signed for the European Cup holders Bath, and the England Under-20 prop Michael Worsley will join Gloucester, who need cover at loose-head for Tony Windo and Trevor Woodman.

Refused to confirm the reports, Zisti's agent Greg Keenan said: "Nick was offered a three-year contract and sees the deal as providing long-term security. Zisti will be joined at Bradford next season by Balmuin's promising utility back Michael Withers. Hummel are confident of signing Willie Poching, a World Cup forward with Western Samoa in 1995 who has been released by Sydney St George, for the remainder of the First Division season. St Helens have dismissed reports that Ellery Hanley is favourite to take over from Shaun McKee at Knowsley Road. McKee's contract is not being renewed at the end of the season.

based their applications on receiving some share of the game's Sky television money, so the SLE clubs have to balance their desire to expand geographically — and for the revenue the extra home matches would generate — with the proportion of their own Sky allocation they would have to sacrifice. The most likely outcome is that they will accept two applications on funding of £500,000, compared with their own £750,000. The consortiums from Cardiff and Gateshead appear to have the soundest credentials.

Bradford Bulls are reported to have signed Nick Zisti, a powerful 26-year-old winger, from the Australian club Cronulla. Although the Bulls

Rugby League

Trio still on tenterhooks

Andy Wilson

THE consortiums bidding for a 1999 Super League franchise for Cardiff, Swansea and Gateshead will be kept on tenterhooks for a further 24 hours.

Officials from the Rugby Football League and Super League (Europe) met in Leeds yesterday to consider a report compiled by Deloitte-Touche on the three franchise applications. But the officials' recommendations must be considered by the 12 existing Super League clubs at a further meeting in Huddersfield tomorrow before any new franchisees are granted licences.

All three consortiums have

refused to confirm the reports, Zisti's agent Greg Keenan said: "Nick was offered a three-year contract and sees the deal as providing long-term security. Zisti will be joined at Bradford next season by Balmuin's promising utility back Michael Withers. Hummel are confident of signing Willie Poching, a World Cup forward with Western Samoa in 1995 who has been released by Sydney St George, for the remainder of the First Division season. St Helens have dismissed reports that Ellery Hanley is favourite to take over from Shaun McKee at Knowsley Road. McKee's contract is not being renewed at the end of the season.

Motor Sport

McRae's \$10m transfer clears way for Burns

David Williams

COLIN McRAE yesterday signed a two-year, \$10 million (£6.5 million) contract with Ford, but the process has all but ruled himself out of the 1999 world rally championship.

The Scot has been won over by a new car, the Escort's

replacement the Focus, by Ford's ambitious team manager Malcolm Wilson and by a new challenge after eight years with Subaru. But it is a step into the unknown for the 1998 world champion.

"It is a bit of a gamble, because the car is brand new, but you've just got to accept that you can't set your sights on the world championship in

your first year," said McRae, who is second in this year's championship, only three points off the pace. McRae's departure makes it almost certain that Richard Burns will join Subaru after two years at Mitsubishi. And if he does agree terms with Subaru, it will leave him as the team's No. 1 driver and a favourite for next year's title.



Off the mark... Frankie Dettori steers the well-backed Bedaya Farah (left) to an easy victory in the mile maiden

PHOTOGRAPH: JULIAN HERBERT

Caballero finds his feet at last

Chris Hawkins sees a top trainer back in cheerful mood as his winning run continues

LIVE Britain reckons he only has to shake the trees for potential top-class horses to drop into his arms and it was no surprise to hear racing's renowned super-optimist talking in terms of Group One contests for Caballero after his colt had won the Copenhagen Conditions Stakes at Windsor yesterday.

It was at the fourth time, asking that Caballero might get off the mark but this was no fault of his own according to Brittain.

"Like a lot of my horses he has been sick and was below par when I ran him in the Coventry Stakes at Royal Ascot which I thought he'd explained. I was obviously hurt there — we found he was suffering from a dust allergy — and it was important for his confidence that he had an easy race today.

but when I walked into the paddock and saw him sweating with the white water between his legs I worried he was remembering his bad experience last time."

Caballero, a big, strong colt by Cadeaux Genereux, was certainly in a better before-hand but on a sun-drenched, humid day this was hardly surprising.

In the end he won as he pleased for Frankie Dettori, beating his market rival, the other 18-1 favourite, Diggit, by two lengths.

Brittain has Caballero in the Prix Morny at Deauville in two weeks time but may go for another small conditions event before tackling the Mill Reef Stakes and Middle Park Stakes.

when taking a Group One at Gelsenkirchen in Germany on Sunday.

Caballero was the second leg of a short-price double for Dettori, who had little more than a steering job on John Gosden's 2-5 chance Bedaya Farah in the Salamanca Maiden Stakes.

Henry Cecil ran two in this and most forecast backers would have included Kieran Fallon's mount Velum (7-2 second favourite), who was caught in the final strides for second by stable companion Epidaurus (18-1), ridden by Willie Ryan.

Tenby, is best when held up for a late run and will try to make such tactics pay in Ireland on August 28 when she will be sent over for the £150,000 Tattersalls Breeders Stakes at The Curragh.

Prizemoney here goes down to 10th place and Mrs Duffield is hoping to do better than last year when her Cape Lane just missed out in finishing 11th.

Chris Scott, a fish merchant from Bristol, missed seeing his Warring won the 49's Handicap but it was not work which kept him away.

A gin and tonic and swimming pool in Portugal took precedence for Scott, who phoned his trainer Malcolm Saunders before racing to explain his absence and find out whether his gelding was fancied.

Saunders, not exactly brimming with confidence, marked his card by telling him that Warring was "one of six that could win the race."

Warring was providing his unsung sire Warrshan with a double after Browning had earlier won the Royal Bank of Scotland Handicap.

Lukaniuk hit for six by stewards

VIC Lukaniuk, the amateur jockey, was banned for a further two days by the Jockey Club stewards yesterday — making six in all — when he looked at his riding of Premier League at Windsor last Monday, writes Chris Hawkins.

The case was reopened after trainer Toby Balding appealed on behalf of the runner-up Koraloona, who was badly hampered when Premier League hung across him in the final furlong of the Bollerger Amateur Handicap but was not awarded the race.

Bath runners and riders

CHRIS HAWKINS	TOP FORM
2.00	Beater
2.30	Magical Dancon
3.00	Beater
3.30	Beater
4.00	Beater
4.30	Beater
5.00	Beater

Left-handed track, last over 12m with 4 run-in which runs all the way to the finish. Separate sections for races over 5-11 and 12-14 fms. Going: Good to Firm. D. Denotes blunders.

Draw: Low numbers favour.

Seven day winners: 2.00 Beater, 2.30 Churcho, 3.00 Sister Parvix, 3.30 Beater, 4.00 Beater, 4.30 Beater, 5.00 Beater.

Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. J.Jumps.

2.00 AUGUST STAKES

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SportsGuardian

Twelve barren years finally end at Headingley

England v South Africa: fifth Cornhill Test, final day

Victorious England break the mould

David Hopps sees Gough and Fraser wrap up the series as South Africa are sent packing in 28 minutes

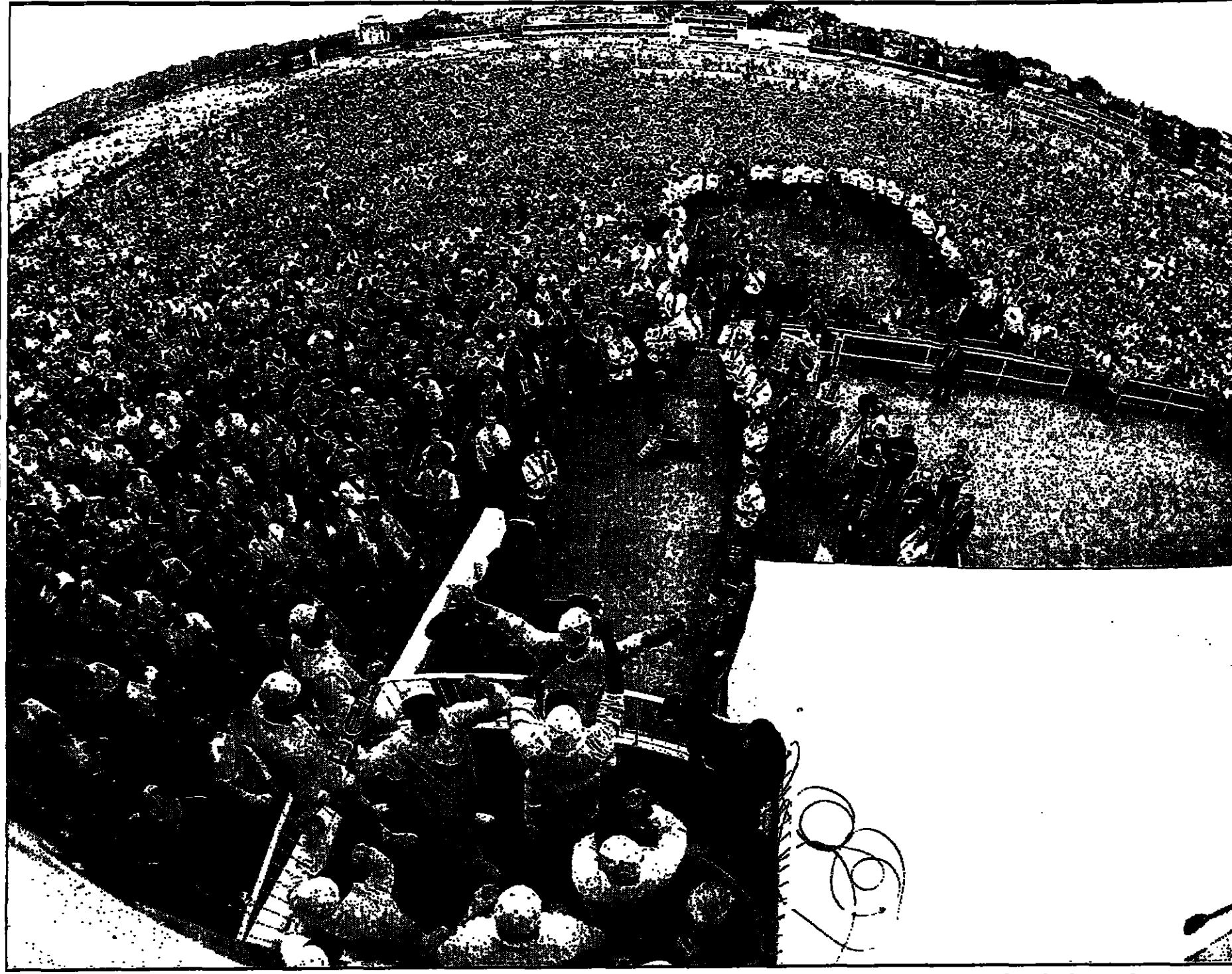
FOR once nobody can misrepresent England's cricketers as little better than a national joke. For once nobody can superficially pronounce that Test cricket in England has already entered its death throes. For once, and it is quite a turn-up to be able to declare it, the England cricket team can declare themselves to be winners.

Twelve years since an England win in a major series: that grating statistic had gathered strength all summer. Well, today it is little more than 12 hours ago, and for a team who have finally freed themselves from the inadequacies of the past, most of those will have been spent in a state of considerable intoxication.

"A little disdain is not amiss; a little scorn is alluring." So wrote William Congreve in *The Way of the World* nearly 300 years ago. That has been the way of the world for English cricket for too long; briefly encouraging, often inept, a delightful invitation to ridicule. In its way, so very English.

That perception has been weakened, if not yet reversed, because England, with their deplorable record on tour, must go to Australia this winter. And as Hansie Cronje, South Africa's captain, pointed out: "It is winning away from home that really boosts your reputation."

But it took 28 minutes yesterday to make a start. South Africa, entering the final day at 185 for eight, were dismissed for 195, leaving England victors by 23 runs. Angus Fraser had Allan Donald caught at the wicket from the merest sliver of an outside edge, and Darren Gough completed his best Test figures, six for 42, by having Makhele Ntini bowled. Ntini, who had faced only one ball all summer, and that against Ireland, was a perfect No. 11 when there was a Test to be won.



Panorama of victory... Alec Stewart, trophy in hand, and Darren Gough, arms outstretched, share the glorious moment with England colleagues and Headingley crowd. ADRIAN MURFELL

Alec Stewart, whose appointment to the captaincy in the spring was deemed to be a stopgap, will deserve the recognition he receives.

Stewart brushes aside excuses and soft thinking as he brushes dust from his shoes. His conviction that English cricket must toughen up is hardly a unique insight. It is shared by the collection of senior players — Mike Atherton, Nasser Hussain, Graham Thorpe, Fraser and Gough — who have committed them-

selves so intensively to breaking the mould. What Stewart has done is draw the "bottom line" in a forceful fashion.

To emphasise, however, that England's advancement has been a team effort, one only has to consider the turning point in the series. In the third Test at Old Trafford, South Africa led by 389 runs on first innings and with nearly two days remaining looked certain to go 2-0 up in the series. Then, with World Cup football monopolising at-

tentions, Test cricket seemed almost inconsequential. The recovery was begun by Atherton and Stewart, captains past and present, both aware that another England crisis loomed. Had either fallen cheaply then, this summer would have ended with the usual bout of recriminations. Instead they remained in a stand of 236, and the following day Robert Croft's unbeaten 37 in three hours scraped a draw.

Croft was left out of the Hea-

dingley squad, but he received a mobile phone call from the England dressing-room yesterday only minutes after their victory. "We sang him a little song," said Stewart. "We didn't want to forget him." It was a small but important touch, which spoke volumes for England's present morale.

Consistency will take a little longer. English cricket remains as mercurial as ever — this fluctuating Test was in many ways a microcosm of the ups and downs of the past 12

years — but at least it is learning how to take a punch on the chin and stay on its feet. If Stewart was assisted by a past captain, Atherton, at Old Trafford, Headingley provided another symbolic moment in the shape of Hussain, who had been the only other serious candidate for the captaincy.

This is an impatient age, weaned on instant entertainment, but England won a Test series because a man toiled for more than seven hours for 94, a batsman, more to the point,

who was once dismissed as chancy but who has worked tirelessly for the past five years to prove otherwise. When Hussain was dismissed on Sunday he trailed from the field, head bowed, and punched the boundary rail in distress not at a lost Test hundred but that he might not have carried the job through. Thanks to the dependability of Fraser and yes, these days, the dependability of Gough, too, he had done enough. Atherton, England's Man of

Final scoreboard

ENGLAND	First innings	Second innings
M A Atherton c Kallis b Ntini	119	37
N Hussain c Boucher b Pollock	10	1
A J Stewart c Kallis b Donald	9	28
M R Rampersad c Boucher b Donald	18	22
G A Hick c Pollock b Ntini	21	22
A Flintoff c Liebenberg b Pollock	27	4
D G Gough not out	24	0
I D Ntini b Fraser	2	10
N Cough c Cullinan b Donald	4	6
A R C Fraser c Cullinan b Donald	21	1
Extras (b4, lb5, nb2, nb10)	20	1
Total (28.3 overs)	280	88
Fall of wickets 45, 55, 110, 161, 186, 195, 198, 200, 213		
South Africa 20.3-4-44-3, Pollock 24-6-61-2, Ntini 21-5-75-4, Kallis 9-4-30-0, McDonald 9-20-24-0		

SOUTH AFRICA	First innings	Second innings
G Kirsten b Fraser	8	3
G F J Liebenberg c Hick b Fraser	21	6
M R Rampersad b Pollock	40	0
D J Cullinan c Stewart b Gough	27	0
N Rhodes c Stewart b Gough	27	0
S M Pollock c Cullinan b Fraser	25	0
B M Makhanyane c Fraser	7	0
M V Boucher c Atherton b Gough	6	0
A A Donald b Fraser	0	0
M Ntini not out	4	0
Extras (b20, nb1)	21	0
Total (20.3 overs)	282	9
Fall of wickets 17, 38, 55, 120, 163, 184, 207, 242, 242		
England 24.3-7-58-3, Fraser 25-10-45-2, Gough 21-4-72-2, Flintoff 9-4-31-0, Boucher 9-4-30-0, Butcher 9-4-23-0		

ENGLAND	First innings	Second innings
M A Atherton c McDonald b Pollock	37	1
M A Atherton b Donald	1	28
A J Stewart c Boucher b Pollock	28	22
M R Rampersad b Pollock	22	4
N Hussain c Cronje b Pollock	22	0
I D Ntini c Boucher b Pollock	4	0
G A Hick c Ntini b Donald	10	0
A Flintoff c Boucher b Donald	0	0
D G Gough c Boucher b Donald	6	0
R C Fraser not out	1	0
Extras (b14, lb1, nb2, nb10)	27	0
Total (19.2 overs)	240	39
Fall of wickets 2, 12, 12, 27, 144, 167, 175, 194		
South Africa 25-14-55-6, Donald 25-8-40-3, Gough 21-4-72-2, Flintoff 9-4-31-0, Boucher 9-4-30-0, Butcher 9-4-23-0		

SOUTH AFRICA	First innings	Second innings
G Kirsten c Atherton b Gough	8	3
G F J Liebenberg b Gough	21	6
M R Rampersad b Fraser	40	0
D J Cullinan b Gough	27	0
N Rhodes c Flintoff b Gough	27	0
S M Pollock c Stewart b Gough	25	0
B M Makhanyane c Fraser	7	0
M V Boucher b Gough	6	0
A A Donald c Stewart b Fraser	0	0
M Ntini b Gough	4	0
Extras (b14, lb1, nb2, nb10)	27	0
Total (75 overs)	198	9
Fall of wickets 8, 12, 12, 27, 144, 167, 175, 194		
England 25-14-55-6, Fraser 25-8-40-3, Gough 21-4-72-2, Flintoff 9-4-31-0, Boucher 9-4-30-0, Butcher 9-4-23-0		

The nation has to learn how to party again



Jim White

A MONTH on from half of France fetching up in the Champs Elysees to glory in national triumph, Headingley was packed yesterday, 11,000 people cramping in for what might conceivably have been only two balls' worth of Test cricket.

Was this not further proof of a nation eager to be there, to sample something, anything, of success at games? A country desperate to revel in the shared pride that can be achieved these days solely in the sporting arena? Or was it more to do with the fact that admission to the ground was

free and the game was taking place in Yorkshire?

Whatever, the crowd was only there because of Alec Stewart's misadventure in the thing should not be ended the evening before, to the considerable chagrin of those who had actually paid to watch the match.

As it turned out, Stewart's decision was sounder than some of his choices on winning the toss this series. After a night's sleep Angus Fraser, who had looked a carhorse in need of a vet around Sunday tea-time, came bounding in with an extra jaunt to his step. Or at least what passes for jaunt in Gue's domain: shoulders sunk, head down, legs plodding, face a mask of misery, as if he were personally responsible for the entire national debt.

Darren Gough, too, had obviously spent the night regrouping the most important muscles in his armoury: after a long gargle in honey and warm water his larynx was prepared and ready to give it that extra yelp for his country.

His appeal for the final wicket, so loud it could have been heard in Lancashire, showed a shouter right back at the top of his form.

As it transpired, no one in Headingley would have begrudged seeing precious little cricket and instead spending most of their free time watching a presentation ceremony elongated way beyond its natural length (something, you felt, more to do with the needs of television schedulers than any sense of occasion); England, after all, had won.

And with triumph came all sorts of new issues for English cricket. No one was quite sure what to do in the circumstances: we were looking at a ground crammed with victory virgins.

"There are youngsters here who have never seen an England victory," said Richie Benaud on the television commentary. Either Benaud was exhibiting even deeper levels of irony than is his custom or it was a coincidence that the camera at that point panned in on a man well over 35.

David Lloyd, too, was clearly out of celebration practice: Bumble apparently fumbled badly when it came to opening the post-win bubbly in the home dressing-room. A few afterwards in the nets with Ron Atkinson will be necessary to bring him up to speed should Ashes parties be in order.

AND then there was the series winners' cheque, handed over to Stewart. It was made out to "The England Cricket Team" and was worth a muscular £200,000. But England captains are not really versed in the etiquette involved in such spoils of victory. Was everyone to get equal dimes? Or would it be split according to performance across the series, with Michael Atherton trousering enough to buy a couple of new Mercedes while Graeme Hick and Ian Salisbury took home £3.50 between them?

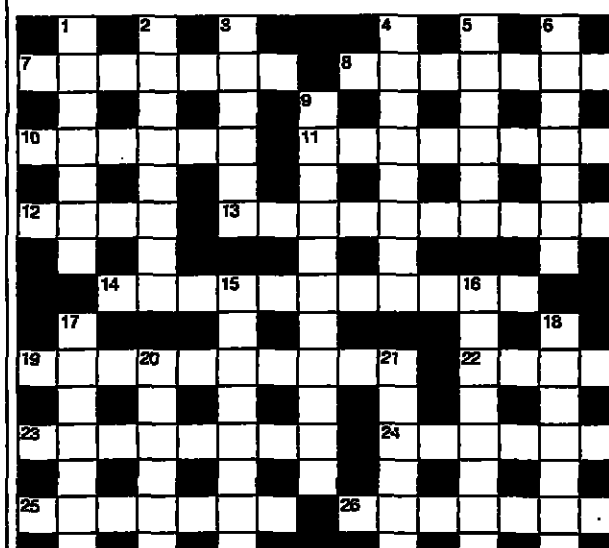
It is said by those used to such things that victory becomes a habit. England supporters will fervently be hoping it is true in this instance,

with the tour of Australia moving into view faster than an Allan Donald bounce and starting around the time of the second round of the Worthington Cup. In truth this looks an England team — but don't say it too loud — capable of achieving a roll.

With the emergence in this series of Mark Butcher — named Man of the Match here, though many South Africans will have felt the most significant contribution to England's victory came from umpire Javed Akhtar's index finger — England now have five batsmen of international stature. Six, if Graham Thorpe returns from his operation anything like his old self. And should Fraser, Gough and Dominic Cork remain injury-free for an entire series, Stewart may well return with the turn after Christmas. In which case you could expect more than a few Yorkshiremen to turn up at any reception to watch the boys returning with that prize. Even if an admission fee were charged for the privilege.

Guardian Crossword No 21,350

Set by Rover

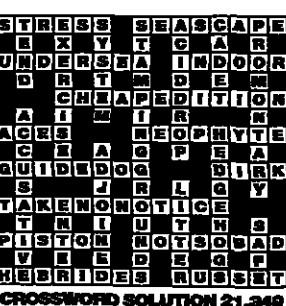


Across

- Strip mill is bored (7)
- 'Mr Steel' — working foundryman (7)
- Dance garment (6)
- Cook in waxy water (8)
- Brighton's calaboose (4)
- Blankets, not pyjamas (10)
- Where 'green' investors hold their nerve? (6,5)
- Centre for coarse fishing on the Isle of Wight? (10)
- Bird which nests in Southern England (4)
- Its choir could be famous (8)
- Experience the Spanish light (8)
- Boom on channel (7)
- They lend and borrow certain horses (7)

Down

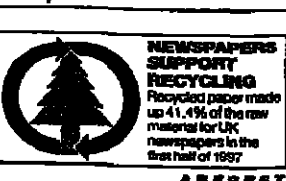
- Hard times for scaffolders by sound of it (7)
- Without us rogue pigs take a run (8)
- Drink in sailor's circle (6)
- It's fine when it's rolled (8)
- Filmsy cut (6)
- Any decent restaurant provides for strikers (7)
- Stern's bow? Nonsense! (11)
- Tall queen in drag act (8)
- Provide for good souvenir (8)
- Apprentice jumping Aintree (7)
- Blubbering like a harpooned whale? (2,5)
- It's not half common, variety programme on TV (6)
- Peter worried about a show again (6)



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For now, universities are reaping the benefits of exploiting new areas of business but as competition increases, market forces may dictate that more areas of academic life are geared towards satisfying the demands of consumers, including fee-paying students.

Brendan Montague looks at the down side of having campuses for hire

Education, G2 page 12

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